The Ta'ziyah: A Popular Expression of Shī'ī Thought

by

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ABSTRACT

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The Ta'ziyah: A Popular Expression of Shī'ī Thought

This thesis is an examination of the text of the ta'ziyah- a dramatic stage-presentation in commemoration of the martyrdom of Ḥusayn, as found in the Pelly edition. The major theories as to the significance of the ta'ziyah are discussed, such as those of racial-political motivation, of parallels with the ancient Near-eastern Adonis-Tammuz festival, and of parallels with Christian soteriology, notably with the Christian Passion play. It is argued that the ta'ziyah is best understood as an expression of soteriological themes, but that these are derived from experiences within the internal developments of Islām. The Islamic origin of these themes is found in the concept of martyrdom in Ḥadīth literature and in a more developed form in recognized Shī'ī creedal statements.

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I shall always remember with gratitude the time which I have been privileged to spend in the "community" of the Institute of Islamic Studies of McGill University. This study has afforded an opportunity for experiencing some of the difficulties of fairly understanding an expression of man's religiousness outside one's own tradition. It has also cultivated a degree of sensitivity in speaking of the faith of other men in spite of evidence that the author may have failed to show much progress.

The system of transliteration of the Institute has been used. I must thank Mr. S. H. Mansur for assistance in this area without imputing to him any responsibility for errors. Conversation with Mr. Abdu-l-Hadi Ha'iri was very helpful in acquiring some understanding of the contemporary state of the ta'ziyah in Iran. The author is especially grateful to Dr. Sheila McDonough for numerous conversations from the very outset which raised questions and aided the author in arriving at some answers.

August, 1965. J W Fiegenbaum

INTRODUCTION

> ... It happened to be the anniversity of the deaths of Hossein and Hassan, the martyred sons of Ali; and the whole Sunni population in the place, were screaming their lamentations within the mosques, also clad in mourning. While passing on to my quarters, amidst this terrible outcry of a whole people in sorrow, I could not but muse on the sort of instinct in human nature, to now and then lower the fire of its constitution by a few voluntary tears. In short, to what else can we assign such regular seasons of weeping as we read of in heathen story, commemorating the deaths of Adonis, and of "Thammuz, wept by Syrian maids?" Here also, is an annual time of mourning ordained by the Mahomedan sages; and I do not doubt its salutary effects on the usual burning blood of his sons, so far to the East. 1

> Not too long ago the Tazzieh, passion play, was enacted the first ten days of Moharram. Moharram is not a lunar month--rather it is a period of a month's duration set aside for religious observance just as many Christians set aside the period of time called Lent. During these first ten days the Tazzieh was presented with such realism that everybody could see and feel the martyr death of Ali and his house. The Shah and his harem attended the play, always, as did everybody else who was near enough to a city or a large village. 2

These two excerpts are presented as typical of the kind of references one comes across as one reads about the land commonly referred to as Persia. The first has to do with the experience of a Western traveller on October 24, 1819 at the ancient site of Ardashir (Artaxata). The second comes from the reflections of an Iranian girl as recorded in a book published in 1953. Both passages refer to an event of singular importance in that part of the world.

In the year A. H. 61 (680) Mu'āwiyah's son, Yazīd, succeeded his father as Khalīfah in Damascus. Ḥasan, the elder son of 'Alī, had come to terms with Mu'āwiyah after the latter was proclaimed khalīfah, in A. H. 40 (661). Ḥusayn, a younger brother of Ḥasan, refused to acknowledge Yazīd as khalīfah upon the death of Mu'āwiyah. In response to an urgent appeal from the citizens of Kūfah to come to their city and to set himself up as the legitimate khalīfah, Ḥusayn departed from Madīnah for Kūfah with a small group of relatives and friends. 'Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād was the Ummawī governor of 'Irāq. He ordered an army to block Ḥusayn's march to Kūfah. At Karbalā', near Kūfah, the encounter took place. Ḥusayn refused to surrender and in the course of the skirmish, Ḥusayn and a number of his party were killed.

The commemoration of this event developed into one of the most remarkable religious phenomena mankind has witnessed. A most impressive part of that commemoration is a dramatic spectacle called the ta'ziyah.

If one were to ask, "What is the ta'ziyah?" he would likely be told that it is the passion play of Persia as the Iranian girl referred to it in the passage above.[3] If that answer left one curious, one could, without much difficulty, find vivid descriptions of the ta'ziyah.[4]

The nature of the ta'ziyah is such that it has attracted comment from individuals of many different backgrounds and interests. Travellers, travelling diplomats, historians, students of literature and the arts, sociologists, Orientalists, and students of religion have all ventured opinions about its significance. They were addressing a Western audience and being Westerners themselves, they drew on Western concepts and ideas to explain the ta'ziyah. The earlier reports in particular were primarily descriptive, and interspersed with brief personal judgments and opinions. The reader was free to elaborate and speculate on the implications of these passing remarks.

If we may be permitted to simplify matters somewhat and classify the comments and explanations offered about the ta'ziyah, we would divide them into three classifications: soteriology, racial-political motivation, and origin.

1) The larger number of comments have been made from the perspective of religious significance. These have understood the ta'ziyah as a religious expression. The majority of those taking religion as their starting point have observed some semblance of a message of soteriology in the ta'ziyah. Words like salvation, redemption, and atonement are used to express what they understood, having witnessed the ta'ziyah or having heard or read about it.[5]

No less a scholar than E. G. Browne declares that "Ḥusayn occupies the same position that Jesus Christ does to the devout Christian, notwithstanding the fact that the doctrine of the Atonement is utterly foreign to the original spirit of Islām."[6] Strothmann affirms that the leading idea is soteriology.[7] Matthew Arnold immediately saw parallels between the ta'ziyah and the Christian Ammergau Passion play.[8] Landau, in a recent book, seems to confirm Arnold's judgment when he writes that the ta'ziyah is "the Persian version of the Mysteries or Passion play in Christian Europe of the Middle Ages, revived in twentieth-century Europe and America."[9] We return to Arnold for further clarification of what he actually saw in the ta'ziyah.

> It is a long way from Kerbela to Calvary; but the sufferers of Kerbela hold aloft to the eyes of millions of our race the lesson so loved by the sufferer of Calvary. For he said: "Learn of me, that I am mild, and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." 10

The main point we have sought to illustrate with these representative comments is their use of parallels from another religious tradition to explain what appeared to them as a redemption motif in the ta'ziyah. Against this background of interpretation, if a reader is not careful, he is orientated along a line of thought that can easily lead him to misinterpret such a simple point as was made by the Iranian girl in her reference to Lent.[11]

Before we proceed to the second classification, we want to reflect a bit further on what we have already presented. In the same source we cited above, Landau observes that the ta'ziyah lacks an important element that is found in both Eastern and Western Passion plays. That element is the leading character's resurrection.[12] Assuming that his observation is correct, an important question must be raised concerning the simple equation of the significance of Ḥusayn and Jesus Christ for their respective religious communities. The Christian theologian is very apt to say, "How can you so easily make a comparison when such an important element as resurrection is not present in the ta'ziyah?" [13] The Christian doctrine of soteriology rests heavily on the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ. But apart from this problem one soon observes that no one is very clear or specific about the idea of soteriology in the ta'ziyah. We ask, "Are these Christian parallels fair and meaningful ways in which to understand and to explain the ta'ziyah? Can more be said about the idea of soteriology or is there a better approach that can be used to explain the ta'ziyah?"

2) Some of the early judgments about the ta'ziyah in the Western world were made from another perspective. We are calling it the racial-political approach. One aspect of this approach was the suggestion that race rather than difference

in religious belief has been responsible for a two-fold division (Sunnī-Shī'ī) in Islām. Gobineau was an early exponent of this view.[14] He saw in the ta'ziyah essentially an expression of any patriotic and nationalistic feelings the Persians may have. This idea continues to appear in more recent writings.

> ...These passion plays are the outcome of whatever national feeling exists in Persia ... The ta'ziyas give expression to this phase of national consciousness and concern themselves generally with the universally acknowledged saints and martyrs of Persia -- 'Alī, Hasan, and Husayn-- who are commonly endowed with god-like qualities. 15

> ... In religious matters the Safavis were tolerant. ... Two interesting features may be noticed. The Armenian community was recognized, ...; and the ta'ziyès were introduced -- ... performed annually -- in some parts even to this day. The religious views of the Safavis were, indeed, governed far more by national considerations than by anything else; ... 16

Certain historical factors are being considered in the context of the latter passage that cannot be entered into here. Nevertheless, nationalistic or political motivations is implied. A relevant question for this study is whether the ta'ziyah reflects a racial or political bias, and if it does, to what extent? If this is the motivation behind the ta'ziyah, to what extent is the ta'ziyah to be understood as a religious drama?

3) In the course of reading about the ta'ziyah one comes across suggestions that connect the ta'ziyah with the ancient Adonis-Tammuz festival. We noted such a reference at the outset of this paper.[17] This further complicates our desire to under-

stand the ta'ziyah. This theory would suggest an ancient origin. How is one to reconcile the theory of an ancient origin with statements, also not uncommon, which inform us that the ta'ziyah is a recent development?[18]

Strothmann has written, "The significance [of the ta'ziyah] can only be ascertained from an unprejudiced examination of which is actually said."[19] The common approach has been to offer some description of what has been seen. A specific analysis of what has been heard, other than the groans and sobs of the weeping ones, the sounds of clanging chains, and the rhythmic beat of various instruments, is lacking in the material which I have found available.

Texts of the ta'ziyah are available from which to make the kind of study which Strothmann suggests is necessary. By text we mean a written record of what actors have actually said as the ta'ziyah was performed. There are some peculiarities associated with these texts, and we shall need to discuss them and keep them in mind. Nevertheless, the examination of a text of the ta'ziyah should provide an opportunity for the ta'ziyah to speak for itself. Can it provide us with at least a partial answer to some of the questions we have raised above? What does it really have to say? What are the salient ideas and concepts? Do they provide us with any key to understanding its message?

How does the ta'ziyah understand the event of Karbalā'? Why is the ta'ziyah presented? What significance can it have for its audience? Does its thought have any relation to Islām in general or to ShI'I Islām in particular?

We do not suggest that it will be possible for us to answer all of these questions. We have simply wanted to underscore the fact that there is some confusion about the ta'ziyah, and perhaps there is more that can be said. It may be that an approach to the ta'ziyah through its text will be of help. This is the approach and the purpose of this study.

Before we turn to an examination of the text proper, there are certain preliminary matters that should be considered in order to provide a proper perspective for understanding an analysis of the text. These preliminary, but essential, matters involve us in such considerations as: the meaning of the word, ta'ziyah, and how it is used; the occasion of the ta'ziyah on several different levels to insure the proper background for understanding the message; and the peculiarities connected with the nature of the ta'ziyah and its texts that need to be recognized, apart from which, an analysis of the message could be superficial. Attention can then turn to the task of ascertaining what the ta'ziyah says. Finally, we will be interested in relating any information which the ta'ziyah had made available to the questions we have raised.

CHAPTER ONE

SOME ESSENTIAL PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Ta'ziyah - Meaning and Use of the Word

The Occasion of the Ta'ziyah

In Reference to Karbalā'

In Reference to the Muḥarram Festival

In Reference to a Theatrical Development

Peculiarities of the Ta'ziyah in Reference to a Text

CHAPTER ONE

SOME ESSENTIAL PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Ta'ziyah - Meaning and Use of the Word

In the course of this study the word, ta'ziyah, will appear numerous times. It is imperative to make clear the meaning of the word, the ways in which it has been used, and the specific way in which it is used in this paper. The meaning of the word may furnish an early suggestion about the significance of the ta'ziyah. An undefined use of the word can contribute to misunderstanding and confusion, since the word has been used in different ways.[1] Finally, a statement about the specific way in which the term is used in this paper, will define more precisely the scope of this study. The following discussion should illuminate these reasons for a consideration of the meaning and use of the term, ta'ziyah.

1) The word, ta'ziyah, is common to both the Arabic and Persian languages. In its verbal form (II) it means to persuade a person to bear with equanimity the death or loss of someone or something -- to console, comfort, or express sympathy. As a verbal noun (II) it carries the idea of "consolation, solace, comfort, condolence."[2] While it never occurs in the Qur'ān, it does occur in the books on fiqh where Muslims are "exhorted

to condole with the relatives."[3] Therefore, in its general and basic meaning, ta'ziyah refers to a sympathetic identification with someone in sorrow. On this level, ta'ziyah is not associated with any specific group, person, institution, or phenomenon.

2) The concept of the imāmate is a cardinal doctrine in Shī'ī Islām. It is essential to acknowledge that the imāms were murdered.[4] The Shī'ah hold to the tradition "that no imām can die a natural death."[5] In popular versions of history Muhammad and his family, as well as a related line before and after his time, were constantly the victims of deceptive plots.[6] Their tragic death in itself never came as a surprise to the people, for the imāms had informed them before hand.[7] But the predestined end of each imām was especially tragic to the Shī'ī community in the light of the essential function of the imām. Their deaths were without equal as an occasion for mourning and lamentation. Hence, ta'ziyah is particularly associated with the tragic deaths of the imāms.

3) Husayn, of all the imāms, is the chief one for whom ta'ziyah is made. The initial emotional and religious impact of Husayn's death at Karbalā' continued to be meaningful for the Shī'ī community and eventually found expression in the festivities of Muharram, which became increasingly important up through the 19th century.[8] As a consequence, Husayn has

received the greater attention in the practice of ta'ziyah.

4) Ta'ziyah has come to be associated with Husayn in several tangible ways. In north India, in particular, replicas or models of Husayn's tomb have become common and are important accessories in the Muharram festivities, especially in the processions that take place on the tenth of Muharram. Such a model is commonly called a ta'ziyah,[9] although the more general term for these models is tābūt.[10] The size and construction may vary considerably. They are constructed before Muharram and are on display until the tenth day when they are taken in procession. All but the more expensive ones are usually taken to a kerbala where they are buried in prepared graves. The more expensive ones may be used year after year. The burial ground is often near a river; in Bombay the sea is used.[11]

5) The first ten days of the month of Muharram are days of mourning for the death of Husayn. The various activities of this period may be considered an expression of sympathy or condolence for his martyrdom. In this sense, ta'ziyah may serve as a general term for the Muharram festivities.

6) In certain parts of the Shī'ī world a dramatic presentation, theatrical in nature, was developed. The development made most progress in Persia. In more distant Shī'ī centers of population like India, the dramatic aspect is not entirely

missing, but it does not match the development which took place in Persia. The stage presentation is also called a ta'ziyah. This is the more prominent technical meaning that the word, ta'ziyah, has assumed. It is the way in which the term will be used in this study. The stage presentation appears to be a rather recent development; more attention will be given to this matter in the course of the discussion of this chapter. It is a text or script of the actual words spoken by the actors in the ta'ziyah which will be the object of interest in this study. The text we shall use was collected in Persia where the ta'ziyah as a theatrical production became the climactic aspect of the Muharram festivities by the 19th century. We shall be dealing, therefore, with the most concrete development of the Muharram festival through an available text. Because of the ta'ziyah's popularity, it would appear to be an important expression of popular religion. At the same time it should be recognized that in restricting the study to a particular text, there are limitations on the particular questions that can be answered in a study of this nature.

The Occasion of the Ta'ziyah

In Reference to Karbalā'

> The murder of Husayn --
>
> ... no more horrible event than it has occurred in Islam. Indeed, the murder of ''Ali' was the greatest

> disaster, but this event included hideous murdering, taking prisoner and mutilation enough to make the flesh creep. Also I may spare myself prolixity on this subject, because it is well-known, being, the most notorious of disasters, may God's curse be on him who took part in it, ordered it, or in any way liked it; may He accept from him no recompense or compensation, and may He make him one of those frustrated in their works, whose efforts go astray in the life of this world whilst they think that they are doing good works. 12

This statement is representative of the importance of Karbalā' and the feelings toward it in Shī'ī literature. Ameer Ali calls it "the most memorable event in the pages of the annals of Islam."[13] Surely no event is better known among the Shī'ī masses. The Muharram festival has annually reinforced this.

There are difficulties in reconstructing the immediate significance of the Karbalā' event. It is a part of the larger problem of accurately reconstructing the history of Shī'ī Islām. The Shī'ah have never received the consideration that has been accorded to Sunnī Islām. It is still typical for one writing on the Shī'ah to deplore the lack of an adequate investigation of all aspects of this important Islamic development.[14] The most extensive research has been of recent date. Without it the history of the life and thought of the early Islamic community is distorted.

As resources continue to accumulate, and as more and more attention is given to the Shī'ī branch of Islām, the more obvious it becomes that the general impressions given by

Shī'ī writers and by Sunnī heresiographers about the early Shī'ī movement have to undergo radical revision. The chief offense is the tendency to push later developments back into the early history of the Shī'ī movement. This leaves the impression that the Shī'ah were a well-defined group with certain clarified doctrines from the earliest days of Islām. Through critical historical study we are now aware that the sources themselves actually reveal a different story. The early period is far more vague and general than the typical account would lead one to believe. Not until the ninth century did Shī'ī Islām take definite shape.[15]

Karbalā' was an event in that early period. Here only a brief sketch is presented for the purpose of putting the event in some proper historical perspective.

Shī'ī Islām places much emphasis upon traditions which say that before his death, Muhammad appointed 'Alī as his legitimate successor. Upon his death 'Alī's cause was championed by a group of loyal supporters, but the promised position was usurped from him.

Recent historical studies are throwing new light on the early history of Islām.[16] We know that the death of Muhammad created a crisis in the Muslim community. For some it seems to have come as a surprise: in any case the community was not ready

for it, and the various reactions would imply that no clear directive was available concerning what to do.[17] 'Alī does not figure prominently in any of the several steps which were taken to pick a new leader for the ummah. It is sometimes said that the Ansār were his chief supporters, but the facts indicate that on the arrival of Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and Abū 'Ubaydah, the Ansār were in the process of giving the oath to one other than 'Alī. And significantly enough, 'Alī is reported to have stayed with the body of Muhammad and to have taken no initiative in securing the position which supposedly had been promised to him. If Muhammad had given specific directions, the action of the community might be regarded as willful disobedience of the Prophet -- an unlikely possibility. Furthermore, a legitimist claim would have been an innovation of the sunnah of the Arab community. While 'Alī was a central figure in the early community, he was too young (around thirty) to have been a serious contender when there was a company of older and equally revered men from which to choose.

'Alī continued to be an influential figure in the life of the community that had suddenly burst into existence. In the course of time he became Khalīfah, but it was soon evident that he did not take up his responsibilities with the status that had been accorded the first three Khulafā'. The Ummawīs

refused to give him allegiance. The companions had been on the defensive since the election of 'Uthmān, and it was soon evident that not even they were to be counted on by 'Alī. Power and authority no longer resided in Madīnah or Makkah, but in the army settlements on the fringes of the kingdom. 'Alī found it expedient to move headquarters to Kūfah.

Apart from any moves on 'Alī's part, things were going from bad to worse. When he did act, matters seem to have become even worse. His own supporters were far from a unified party. At best he ended up with a small core of bitter partisans.

But there were some very important names identified with him. Men like Ziyād, Mughīrah, and Muhammad ibn Abū Bakr draw attention to the political character of 'Alī's party. Muhammad was an ardent supporter of 'Alī and was very active in Egypt for the overthrow of 'Uthmān. Ziyād and Mughīrah continued to be active in the political and administrative affairs of the Ummawīs; they were among the most prominent figures in early Islamic history. Most important as an active supporter of 'Alī was Mālik al-Ashtar. He was leading 'Alī's forces to victory in the Battle of Siffīn when appeals for arbitration were made. Wellhausen points out that although later historians regarded al-Ashtar as a revolutionary and tend to give credit to 'Alī, Abū Mikhnaf describes sympathetically the brilliant military leadership of

al-Ashtar, the Yemenite -- "a genuine Arab nobleman as opposed to the pious bigots and the lukewarm or cunning politicians."[18]

Numbered among the followers of 'Alī are two rather legendary characters who have figured prominently in the traditional historical account of the Shī'ah. Salmān al-Fārisī has been claimed by various sects and it has been said that he is the founder of Sūfism. He is said to have been a close associate of 'Alī and "the authority for the tradition of a light ray from which Muhammad and 'Ali were made. [19]

The other name is 'Abd Allāh b. Saba', often presented as the founder of Shī'ī Islām. The earliest explicit theological propaganda about 'Alī is usually associated with ibn Saba'. It is not uncommon to read that he and his followers furnished the Shī'ī movement with a theological basis.[20] He is pictured as a Yemenite Jew converted to Islām. He travelled extensively in all parts of the Kingdom; he was especially active in Egypt where it is said that he agitated the Egyptian rebellion against 'Uthmān. But it is for his religious propaganda that he has been remembered, although his role in this respect is now believed to have been exaggerated.

But the party of 'Alī was essentially political in nature. Such ideas as those reportedly associated with Salmān al-Fārisī and Ibn Saba' were not characteristic of the 'Alids during 'Alī's lifetime.

'Alī had hardly received a "square deal" from anyone; if his zealous supporters were anything but bitter, one would be surprised. The prevailing disquiet among his followers was fertile ground for new developments. There was growing discontent, and it had its religious dimensions. There was general dissatisfaction among the old guard and the pious masses at the course history was taking. For these people the rigorous religiosity for which 'Alī was known had its attractive side.[21] What is probably the first religious sect, the Khārijīs, came out of 'Alī's camp.

The period following the Khilāfah of 'Alī is an important one, but we get only sporadic glimpses of what was taking place as far as the history of the Shī'ah is concerned. Three sons of 'Alī played a historical role in this period: Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah. Ḥasan and Ḥusayn were sons of Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Prophet; and their following is sometimes referred to as the Fāṭimīyah. The followers of Muḥammad are called the Ḥanafīyah. The developments related to each of these two lines are not neatly separated. For our purpose here only the sons of Fāṭimah are of importance.

Ḥasan was the oldest son of 'Alī and Fāṭimah. Proclaimed Khalīfah upon the assassination of 'Alī, he never made more than feeble efforts to take hold of his new responsibilities. He exhibited little political ambition, and his following probably

offered little concentrated support. The shrewd Mu'āwiyah negotiated Ḥasan out of his claims largely on Ḥasan's terms of an attractive monetary sum and pension. The "deal" took around six months to complete.

In typical fashion, a large amount of tradition has grown up around him. This later complimentary material tends to redeem his carefree, irresponsible life of luxury in Madīnah, and to raise him to the level of an imām. His brief Khilāfah was but a feeble abortive sputter amid the "ruins" of his father's tragic end. The episode probably only added bitterness among the faithful, zealous partisans of 'Alī.

Ḥusayn had remained in the background during the controversial days of his father and had resided in Madīnah after the abdication of his brother Ḥasan. His historical role came upon the death of Mu'āwiyah. Mu'āwiyah had paved the way for his son, Yazīd, to succeed him. But Yazīd was soon confronted with several rebellious groups who refused to take an oath of allegiance to him. Ḥusayn was urged to have a part in one of them.

In the area of Kūfah, 'Alī had sought to organize his following. Lacking unity, loyalty, and spirit the Kūfans had let 'Alī down. But since that time they had experienced harsh treatment under Mu'āwiyah's governors, Ziyād and his son 'Ubaydallāh

ibn Ziyād, and resentment had been aroused to the point that the death of Mu'āwiyah was seen as an opportune time to contest the continuance of Ummawī rule. In their desire for independence, support rallied around Husayn. They urged him to come to Kūfah; the suggestion met with his interest in contesting the Khilāfah of Yazīd. Muslim ibn 'Aqīl, a cousin of Husayn, was sent to Kūfah to make preparations for Husayn's coming. But 'Ubaydallāh interfered and had Muslim executed. Husayn appears to have set out with confidence, and he and his small group of friends and relatives stubbornly refused to turn back when ordered to do so by Yazīd's intercepting army. Back in Kūfah, support for Husayn had wilted in the face of Muslim's execution, and a massacre at Karbalā' in A.D. 680 took the life of Husayn and many of his party. The Kūfan plan had been ruthlessly suppressed, and no immediate political consequences came of it.

There is no good evidence that at the time of his life and death Husayn was thought of in terms of the imāmate doctrine of later times. The Hijāz favored Zubayr over Husayn. It was Kufāh that had stirred Husayn's ambitions. And after Karbalā' there seems to have been no leader around whom to rally; the revolt of Zubayr in the Hijāz and in 'Irāq had more wide-spread support and was a more serious threat to Yazīd. The more immediate consequence of Karbalā' was its moral and emotional impact. It

is another factor in the development of the religious side of the Shī'ī movement.[22] Further support of this nature was no doubt forthcoming from raction to the looting of Madīnah and the desecration of the Ka'bah by Yazīd's forces.[23] It was a period of religious agitation over the political issues of the day.

In A. D. 684 some four thousand Kūfans marched against 'Ubaydallāh in a display of enthusiasm, self-devotion, and penitence. The march was unsuccessful, but some significance is to be seen in the purpose of these Kūfans. "They were to show that they repented of the betrayal of al-Husayn (and so are known as the tawwābūn or Penitents), and they were to seek vengeance for his blood."[24]

There is another indication that Karbalā' did not go unnoticed. A movement related to the one above centers around al-Mukhtār b. Abī 'Ubayd al-Thaqafī. He was an orphan and had been cared for by 'Alī's governor in al-Mada'in. He was one of the Kūfans who favored Husayn and was imprisoned at the time of Muslim's execution. Upon release from prison he identified himself with Zubayr in Makkah. Following the march of the Penitents he turned up in 'Irāq and began to organize a movement there. We cannot trace the history of that movement here; but we note his identification with Karbalā' and its sympathizers. Tabarī reports that in a communication with the Penitents he declared

his policy to be based on "the book of God, the Sunnah of the Prophet, vengence for 'the family', defense of the weak, and the jihād against the evildoers."[25] A son of 'Alī's general, al-Ashtar, served as Mukhtār's military commander, and the Karbalā' massacre was used to justify revenge upon his opponents.[26]

Shī'ī tradition acknowledges some dissension over the legitimate successor of Husayn.[27] The two contenders were Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah and 'Alī Asghar, a son of Husayn who survived Karbalā'. The Twelvers regard 'Alī Asghar as the rightful heir and as the fourth imām. He is best known as Zayn al-'Ābidīn (the Ornament of the Pious because of his reputation as a great weeper[28]). In early Shī'ī sources he is the child of Shahrabānū, the daughter of the last Sassanian king, Yazdirgird III, thus able to claim descent from the Prophet and the old Sassanid dynasty.[29] He died around 712. Subsequent developments indicate that the imāmate was not yet hereditary, and no important political or religious developments are to be associated with him.

Around 750 developments began to take place which were to have important consequences. The idea of nass had begun to take shape in the previous decade. Nass was the idea that a particular individual designated by his father and who would subsequently designate his son, and so on, was to be recognized as the rightful leader over a community. Accompanying this idea

was the notion that in the act of designation a special gift of knowledge was also passed on. The idea of nass begins to be recognizable in connection with al-Bāqir who is traditionally regarded as the fifth imām. He was of the Husaynī line. But the idea was also at work among the followers of Mukhtār who had claimed the son of Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah as their leader.

The 'Abbasīs brought to an end any further designation in the Hanafīyah line. But the doctrine of nass continued to develop in the Husaynī line under the influencial guidance of Ja'far al-Sādiq (d. 765) who came to be regarded as the sixth imām. His influence contributed to an important watershed in Shī'ī history. He was a strong personality and was able to consolidate Shī'ī sentiment and strength. He qualified as a descendent of both 'Alī and Muhammad through Fātimah. He also attracted a vigorous following with influence even outside the immediate group. Even Sunnī circles looked back on him with respect.

The subsequent Shī'ī developments are directly related to the following which rallied around Ja'far. His son Ismā'īl became involved in the organization of a number of revolutionary groups which became known as the Ismā'īlīs. Through Mūsā, another son of Ja'far, developments continued which eventually led to the formation of the Twelvers. They continued to be proponents

of the idea of nass and held that 'Alī was the legitimate successor to Muhammad. Around 874 after the disappearance of Muhammad (al-Mahdī) they were slowly pulled together as a group with some common identity. An unbroken line of descent was established and Twelver Shī'ah had come into being. The next century found them in positions of political favor, and we shall see how political action furthered the commemoration of Karbalā'.

In the discussion above consideration was limited to the early history of the Twelvers; the ta'ziyah is their creation, and it alludes to history from the time of the Prophet to the martyrdom of Husayn. Of course, it is based on the version of history as popular Shī'ī tradition remembers it and not as it is reconstructed above. The significant factor here is that even apart from popular historical tradition, the discernible facts support the verdict of Karbalā''s significance from the date of the event itself. Nor was the impact short-lived.

The pilgrimage of the Penitents in 684 was but the beginning of numerous pilgrimages to the spot where Husayn met death at Karbalā'. According to Ibn al-Athīr such acts took place in 122/739-40 and also in 436/1044-45.[30] Tabarī mentions that the mother of the Khalīfah, al-Mahdī (775-85) endowed the religious officials at Mashhad Husayn[31] which would suggest that it had become an important religious center at a very early

date. Such patronage was reversed when under al-Mutawakkil (847-61) the center was destroyed and pilgrimages were forbidden.[32] But neither that act nor subsequent acts of that nature were to eliminate its importance as a place of pilgrimage and as a religious center.[33]

In Reference to the Muharram Festival

In another sense the Muharram festival is the occasion of the ta'ziyah. Two aspects of this occasion should receive summary attention. The first has to do with some historical and literary notes; the second with a description of some of the typical features of the Muharram festival in order to appreciate the context in which the ta'ziyah was born and in which it is performed.

The historical notes follow chronologically what has been said about Karbalā' in historic perspective. The information available concerning the development of this annual festival is sketchy at best. Nevertheless even a few facts and a brief general discussion shed some light on the nature of the phenomenon which we seek to understand.

The Muharram festival takes place during the first ten days of the month of Muharram. This month has a long and complicated history of significance that goes back into the

pre-Islamic era. The tenth day, in particular, was set aside for a number of reasons. Islamic tradition traces the day's significance back to very ancient times. It was regarded as the day upon which the first rain fell, the day of the first meeting of Adam and Eve outside of Paradise, and the day that Noah left the ark.[34]

Historical studies more commonly identify the day with 'Āshūrā', the Jewish Day of Atonement.[35] Certain aspects of the Jewish custom were adopted and adapted by the early Islamic community. This development, however, took a different turn after strained relations with the Jewish constituency arose. But in spite of this rift, the 'Āshūrā' fast has remained a voluntary fast day for Muslims and has continued to be observed by some Sunnī communities.

The commemoration of the martyrdom of Husayn at Karbalā' on the tenth of Muharram has largely overshadowed any other important association with the day. But the earlier associations may well have contributed indirectly to the acceptance and the development of the Muharram festival into such a prominent and widespread occasion of religious dimensions.

We have already seen that the event of Karbalā' had an emotional and religious impact of considerable staying power within the Islamic community. It comes as no surprise then that

the Shī'ī Buwāyhīs instituted a period of mourning (تعزیہ) in Baghdād in 352/963 in commemoration of the martyrdom of Husayn.

> "It is related in the History of Ibn Kathīr the Syrian that Mu'izzu'd-Dawla Ahmad ibn Buwayh issued orders in Baghdād that during the first ten days of Muharram all the bazaars of Baghdād should be closed, and that the people should wear black for mourning and betake themselves to mourning for the Chief of Martyrs [the Imām Husayn]. Since this procedure was not customary in Baghdād, the Sunnī doctors regarded it as a great innovation; but since they had no control over Mu'izzu'd-Dawla, they could do nothing but submit. Thereafter every year until the collapse of the Daylamite [or Buwayhid] dynasty, this custom of mourning was observed by the Shī'ites in all countries during the first ten days of Muharram. In Baghdād it continued until the early days of the reign of Tughril the Saljūq." 36

This political endorsement was probably a recognition of popular sentiments which already existed. Sometimes political and religious friction interrupted the annual celebration.

> In the year A. H. 402 (A.D. 1011-12) the reigning Buwayhid prince Bahā al-Dawla permitted the residents of Karkh to celebrate the 10th day of Muharram as a day of mourning. The bazaars were closed, men and women wore mourning garments and marched through the streets in procession. But it must be admitted that the prince himself, at the orthodox Festival of Sacrifice, distributed clothes, wheat, dates and money amongst the poor. ... Afterwards he set free prisoners and pardoned debtors who owned less than ten dīnārs. Where it was more he accepted assurances that the money would be paid. 37

Benevolent acts and the releasing of prisoners are noted as prominent features of the Muharram festival in later years.[38] Tīmūr (d.1405) who "showed respect for shrines and sacred edifices, and for men reputed holy or learned"[39] is traditionally credited with the

originality of the demonstrations.[40] Nādir Shāh in his efforts to close the division between the Sunnīs and the Shī'ah forbade the ta'ziyah (general meaning) in 1736 but found it difficult to enforce.[41]

The Safawī era made its contribution largely through literary works which lauded the virtues and the tragic sufferings of the Imāms. The Safawī kings are said to have encouraged the poets in this direction. Shāh Tahmāsp is said to have remarked that "poetry written in praise of kings and princes was sure to consist largely of lies and exaggerations, ... but that since it was impossible to exaggerate the virtues of the Prophet and the Imāms, the poet could safely exert his talents to the full, and in addition would have the satisfaction of looking for a heavenly instead of an earthly reward."[42] The most famous of these poets was Muhtasham.[43] His poetry was very effective in stimulating intense feelings for what happened at Karbalā'. Such poetry inspired a great amount of similar religious poetry on a popular level.[44]

This poetry found its way into collections which were used extensively by rawza-khwāns, the professional reciters of marāthī during the days of mourning. These individuals often occupied the pulpits which introduced the festival as well as the ta'ziyah. Lesser ones moved from home to home and village

to village and were hired to recite before more private majālis or mourning assemblies. These recitations were commonly called "Rawda /Rawza/- Khwānī" and are said to have received this name from

> one of the earliest and best-known books of this kind, the Rawdatu /Rawzatu/'sh-Shudadā ("Garden of the Martyrs") of Husayn Wā'iz-i-Kāshifī, ... 45

Such poetry was even the possession of the common people--they having memorized it as children in the schools.[46] Familiarity with the event of Karbalā' and the popular religious poetry in commemoration of it made it possible for the most humble folk to offer their own ta'ziyah however crude and simple it might be.

The preceeding discussion indicates a continuing interest and development in the event of Karbalā' and in the Muharram festival. The seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were no exception to the course of this development. By the middle of the seventeenth century we know that elaborate ceremonies were taking place in connection with Muharram. Travelling diplomats like Olearius (Oelschläger) and Chardin were returning with detailed reports of the spectacle they had witnessed.[47] From then on until the close of the nineteenth century descriptions are readily accessible.[48]

Because descriptions may easily be had there is a temptation to omit any description in this study. But without it a consideration of the text of the ta'ziyah lacks the proper

context, and it is extremely difficult to convey the atmosphere and "color" which surrounds, supports, and permeates the actual performance of the drama. It was previously said that from these centuries there are ample reports of what was seen but a neglect of what was heard. To ignore here what was seen and to consider only what was heard would be to err in the reverse.

There are a number of difficulties connected with providing an adequate description. Quite naturally there are variations in the ceremonies of such a popular and widespread festival. Many of these variations are extremely interesting and not without importance. The primary need here, however, is simply a representative description which will provide the right context in which to understand an analysis of what the ta'ziyah says. One might draw up a description by selecting interesting details drawn from several descriptions. There would be something artificial about such a procedure, and it would also fail to convey the spirit and excitement that breathes through the reports of the eye witnesses. I have, therefore, chosen to include an eye-witness report. It is lengthy, but I would suggest several reasons for including it. Nowhere have I found any important reference to it. It is detailed enough to include most of the typical features one would include in an artificial description. The witness has largely refrained from inserting his own generalizations

and opinions. It provides a picture of the Muharram festival prior to the evolution of a full-blown theatrical production. It is an early eighteenth century report; yet it bears close resemblance to the descriptions from even the late nineteenth century, and it is also remarkably typical of descriptions of Muharram festivities in areas where the theatrical aspect never developed, as in India. While it is not a description of the performance of the ta'ziyah per se, the techniques used are typical of those reported by eye-witnesses to the theatrical production. Finally, I wish to refer to it in a later discussion on the evolution of the ta'ziyah as an elaborate drama.

The following is a description recorded by M. Cornelius Le Bruyn in 1704.[49]

> Upon the sixth of May, the Persians began the mourning ordained for the commemoration of the death of their great saint Hussein, the son of Ali and Fatma, the only daughter of Mohammed, and this they enter upon as soon as they perceive the new moon. ... This mourning continues for ten days together; they appear in the streets in small companies of ten or twelve persons half naked, who blacken their faces, and are not very unlike our chimney-sweepers; a frightful sight! They affect a mortified air, and sing out lamentations to the sound of certain castagnets, we have formerly mentioned. The murder of this saint is represented by persons in arms, and by his image which is very large and hollow, and put into motion by a person enclosed within it, and whole legs are plainly to be seen. Those concerned in this mummery and who carry this image about, receive a reward from the spectators, who give them certain small pieces of silver of very little value; tho' indeed there are some who are more generous to them. For the rest, during this time, they preach

> publicly in the streets morning and evening, and especially in the cross-ways, and the other more frequented parts, which they inclose with tapestry and spread with carpets. They adorn also the walls with bucklars, and other pieces of armour and arms, and the pulpits for the preachers are raised up five or six steps; they hold some written papers in their hands, upon which they often cast their eyes, pronouncing the elogy, and reciting the actions and wonders of the saints. A second preacher some steps below the first pours out, in his turn, the praises of Hussein, singing out with a loud voice. The places where they have these sermons are full of seats and benches; and as I had the curiosity to go to one of them with some friends, they no sooner saw us than they ordered us seats, for the respect they bore to our director, who was in great esteem at Ispahan. I staid there a good half hour, and observed that all the auditors were so affected by the eloquence of their doctors, that they were dissolved into tears. At the corner of the wall of the place where we were, they had placed a great figure indifferently well counterfeited, and stuffed with straw, to represent the murderer of Hussein, called Omar, whom they burn at night in several parts of the city. These sermons or discourses are delivered also in the night in many great places, upon theatres erected for that purpose, with laths, upon which they place above a thousand lamos, but so aukwardly and carelessly that the wind blows out the greatest part of them. For the rest, the number of spectators is inexpressible.

Having described several bands of dancers, Le Bruyn continues with a description of a great procession which took place on the next day.

> This procession opened with some of the Deroga's officers on horseback, who were followed by some singers with each a taper in his hand, and in vests either of purple or black, agreeable to the nature of the solemnity and the lamentations that were made; some of them were also half naked, and others carried a great black standard furled up. After these, there appeared three camels, upon the first of which there appeared two

boys almost naked, three upon the second, one behind another, and upon the third, the image of a woman covered up, with a little boy. Then five other camels, upon each of which there were seven or eight little boys, who were also almost naked, in cages of lath, and two ensigns followed them. Then a chariot with an open coffin containing a dead body, followed by another covered with white and some singers. After this there appeared a chariot laden with incense with two persons, and four little boys, with each a book in his hand, and with a table before them. This chariot was surrounded with what looked like tinned lamps, and was followed by a great standard furled up, and by twelve armed soldiers, with each an helmet on his head; and these by two little boys comically dressed up, with feathers and bells. Then came a young prisoner on horseback, followed by sixteen others chained one after another, and five other pinioned. After these appeared a chariot covered with sand, out of which appeared six bloody heads, but the bodies were not to be seen, so that one would have said they had been cut off: There were two persons dressed in his chariot, which was followed by that which carried the body of Hussein, represented by a man in armour, with a sabre in his hand. He was all over covered with blood, to stir up the people to grief and lamentation, and indeed their sighs, and groans, and outcries are not to be expressed; and it must be confessed there can be nothing more moving than this sight, which we had it not in our power to laugh at, though we were very sensible of the ridicule and idle superstition of the whole. This chariot was followed by a number of young persons, some of them pinioned, and some with their arms free, attended by a guard armed with staves, with which they, from time to time, threatened them, upon which they would stoop down their heads the most naturally in the world, (sic) These were followed by a great chariot, drawn by men, like the rest, covered also with bloody sand, upon which were two dead bodies, and four others, of which there appeared nothing but the head; six young turtle doves went backwards and forwards in this chariot, after which there appeared another, from which came out legs and arms, and in which there were two lighted tapers; then a third with six heads and two persons dressed, followed by another with a dead body in armour, and person as it were sick. Then two ensigns, and an horse

with the saddle on one side, attended by two drums and some singers, and then another chariot upon which there were two coffins, and two little boys, with each a book in his hand, who, from time to time, embraced them, and acted their part wonderfully well. This went before another of extraordinary size, containing ten or twelve dead bodies, of which nothing was to be seen but their bloody legs and arms, with five or six prisoners, followed by a young man on horse-back, wounded with arrows; he was all over blood, seemed to be a stranger, and seemingly so faint he was ready to fall. After him appeared a coffin covered with a black cloth, attended by singers and dancers who seemed to conduct it in triumph, and after them were carried three lances adorned with precious stones. Then came an horse laden with bows and arrows, a turbant, and great standard; then five other horses, laden with bucklers, bows, and arrows; and three javelins upon the points of which appeared an hand. At least, this procession was closed by an horse richly caparison'd upon which there were three pair of pigeons; but this horse was not in his place.

After I had seen all this sight, and ecclesiastick was so good as to explain the whole mystery of it to me: He told me, the turtle-doves I had seen upon one of the chariots, represented those which appeared upon the body of Hussein when he was killed, and that these same turtle doves, daubed with his blood, flew away to Medina, where lived this saint's sister, who upon sight of them knew of his death, as she had foretold it beforehand. That the chariot with the two coffins, attended by two little boys with each a book in his hand, represented the two sons of Hussein, Ali-Asker and Ali-Echbar, whom they give out to have been slain with arrows. That the young man wounded with arrows was designed also to represent Ali-Echber; (sic) that the coffin covered with black was that of Hussein; and that the chariot with six heads, by which there were two persons dressed, represented his children. That the steel or iron hand fixed at the point of the javelins, was the signal of war which the leaders or partisans of the Persian Mohammedans wore formerly upon their standards, and that the five fingers of that hand represented Mohammed Ali Fatma, the daughter of Mohammed and the wife Ali, Hassan and Hussein; So that every part of this procession

> refers to some circumstance or other of the death of Hussein and his seventy two friends slain with him, and canonized for martyrs by the Persians.
>
> It is to the last degree surprising that the persons whose heads, legs, and arms appear in the chariots, should be able to contain themselves without the least motion, for the whole day together that this procession lasted. Most of the heads had even long beards, and their necks were so squeezed, that the head seemed separated from the body, besides that their eyes moved hardly at all. But I was told upon this occasion they make them swallow down a kind of drink which deprived them of their senses, and of all motion during the time. For the rest, there is no being imposed on with regard to this, for I presently distinguished the only head of wax which was among the rest; and indeed it must be acknowledged the Persians are very artful in these sorts of representations.

Le Bruyn then reports on several processions which took place the next day. They are not important for our use here and are omitted. We conclude with one last bit of description which indicates the tension that is so typically referred to in nearly every report.

> ... the Deroga who was present with above a thousand horsemen, takes a very particular care to prevent their [those in the procession] coming to blows, posting his people in the van, the center and the rear of this procession. He posts others also upon the way they are to pass, and suffers not the districts to advance but the one after the other. ... These precautions are so much the more necessary, as the Persians have a notion, that those who perish upon this occasion go directly to Paradise. And accordingly they make no enquiry after murders committed at that time, which those who bear malice against others, fail not to take advantage of, ...

In Reference to a Theatrical Development

In 1807, James Morier, the son of a British Consul in Constantinople, was appointed to the British Embassy in Persia, and set out upon his first tour of duty. He, like previous travellers and travelling diplomats, kept an account of the proceeding of his mission and later had them published as an answer to the growing curiosity which earlier reports had aroused in England. In that book, A Journey Through Persia,[50] Morier is generally credited with being the first European to make reference to a dramatic representation as an important part of the Muharram festival.[51] It was on February 23-25, 1809, that Morier, as the guest of Persian dignitaries, witnessed several dramatic enactments of seenes from Karbalā'.

In 1810 he returned to Persia on a second mission as representative of his country and lived there until 1816. Again from extensive journals which he kept, he extracted a second publication which is more important for a detailed account of the ta'ziyah.[52] On the basis of Morier's report of a dramatic spectacle of a theatrical nature, it is generally concluded that the ta'ziyah is an early 19th century development.[53]

This conclusion may be substantially correct. At least it appears to have become an accepted fact, whereas a fuller study may well reveal that the ta'ziyah was making its

appearance in certain areas at an earlier date. It is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate fully this matter, but some observations may not be irrelevant here.

These observations are based on the description of Le Bruyn above. When the ta'ziyah is said to be a 19th century development, it seems that the conclusion was reached after a comparison of the reports of Olearius and Chardin with the reports of Morier.[54] Olearius and Chardin do not mention anything of a theatrical nature. Olearius was in Persia from 1636 and Chardin was there from 1664 to 1670 and 1671 to 1677. Morier witnessed the ta'ziyah in 1809. The gap between these dates is considerable, and the conclusion takes no cognizance of numerous available reports between the time of Chardin and that of Morier.

The description of Le Bruyn does not indicate a full-blown theatrical spectacle, but it does suggest that already in 1704 certain aspects of the festivities would not have to develop greatly to become such. The stage with props and symbols and the accommodations for an audience are present in embryonic form. The presence of several pulpits suggests the simultaneous participation of several euologists in a presentation of the "actions and wonders of the saints." The main procession which Le Bruyn describes need only be transferred to the stage. The dramatic portrayal of Karbalā' is present with techniques for the realistic presentation of the event. The addition of the verbal aspect of

the drama would present no problem. The traditional story of the event was well-known, and appropriate literary materials had accumulated over the years. The transference of the main procession with its historical theme to the stage would still leave the ta'ziyah in the context of processions as we later find it. It at least seems reasonable to suggest that in Le Bruyn's description we see the main procession with all the potentials for an easy transition into the ta'ziyah as a religious drama. If this be true it may not only affect the dating of the ta'ziyah, but it also sheds some light on the arguments pro and con as to whether European drama influenced the development of the Persian ta'ziyah.[55] Such an outside force would appear unnecessary to account for the development, as the development may be conceived to be natural and gradual as the Muharram festivities continued to grow in importance.

Nevertheless, the Morier report must be credited with stimulating interest in the ta'ziyah in the West. This interest was furthered by the work of Comte de Gobineau. On his experiences as a French representative in Persia, he wrote his well known, Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale, which was first published in 1865.[56] Gobineau's chief interest was with Mirzā 'Alī Muhammad, the important figure in the early history of the Bābī religion, but he also devoted three chapters to

theatre in Central Asia. This was a legitimate subject for inclusion because of the religious importance of the ta'ziyah. This book, which was so influential in leading E. G. Browne into the field of Persian studies, caught the attention of Matthew Arnold.

The Ammergau Passion Play had become a topic of discussion in England, and Arnold was impressed with the way this dramatic presentation had met with favorable comments from Christians so far apart as Catholic priests and Protestant Dissenting ministers. The Ammergau discussion reminded Arnold of Gobineau's account of the ta'ziyah.

> The Passion Play at Ammergau, with its immense audiences, the seriousness of its actors, the passionate emotions of its spectators, brought to my mind something of which I had read an account lately; something produced, not in Bavaria nor in Christendom at all, but far away in that wonderful East, from which, whatever airs of superiority Europe may justly give itself, all our religion has come, and where religion, of some sort or other, has still an empire over men's feelings such as it has nowhere else. 57

Arnold saw in the ta'ziyah elements common to Ammergau, and he was convinced that these are universally appealing to all mankind.

Arnold wrote an essay based upon Gobineau's book in which he popularized for English readers the impressive "passion" play of the East. It was published in "Cornhill Magazine,"[58] but reached an even wider audience when it was added to a series of essays published under the title, Essays in Criticism.[59]

Until the last quarter of the 19th century no Western had paid any serious attention to the conversation which took place on the stage. Dozy, in his Essai sur l'Histoire de l'Islamisme (c. 1879),[60] had, like Gobineau, included a text of a particular scene in translation. But the first more helpful publication, as far as light on the text was concerned, was the book, Theatre Persan, by A. Chodzko published in 1878.[61] His introduction and five complete scenes in French translation from Persian texts are frequently quoted. A year later, 1879, Pelly's edition was published in English, and it remains the most extensive presentation of scenes of the ta'ziyah available in one particular collection.[62] In 1927 Litten's collection of some fifteen specimens in Persian were published in Das Drama in Persien.[63] In recent years, persons interested in the performing arts have recognized the ta'ziyah as the sole expression of its type in that part of the world until very recent times.[64]

Western acquaintance with the ta'ziyah was taking place at the very time that the ta'ziyah was at its height. From around 1884 to the present the ta'ziyah has increasingly been curtailed, largely because of abusive practices associated with the processions.[65] Le Bruyn's description makes mention of this potential abuse. Religious leaders have been embarrassed by the fanatic excitement and violence that has often marked the

Muharram celebration; however, they have often supported and participated in the presentations. There has also been objection to the crude impersonations of such important personages. The excessive zeal has been denounced as contrary to the commands of the Prophet. The sentiments of Ameer Ali speak for the educated and for at least some of the religious leaders:

> The enlightened men among the Mohammedans themselves, should endeavour to do away with such demonstrations, preserving only what is of value in their observance. These demonstrations have here become more a theme of play-acting and pleasure, instead of being an annual occasion of lamentation and mourning. 66

The Muharram festival has also understandably been a troublesome affair in the eyes of the political leaders. Whereas once even the Shāh made contributions and graced the performance with his presence, in 1935 the Shāh forbade not only the processions but the ta'ziyah itself.[67] Nevertheless, a considerable gap exists between the religion of the common people and that of the educated and religious leaders. And in spite of condemnation from above, the ta'ziyah and other aspects of the Muharram festival continue as a vital expression of popular religion even if forced to do so in a more private and subdued way.[68]

Peculiarities of the Ta'ziyah in Reference to a Text

There are a number of peculiarities of the ta'ziyah which should be kept in mind in any consideration of its message.

Some of these characteristics are implicit in the discussion to this point. Here we must simply make them explicit, as well as say something about the text which will be used in this study.

We have seen that the ta'ziyah has a long history behind it. There was very likely no deliberate attempt to create a drama theatrical in nature. Its birth was the result of gradual developments. The historical event of Karbalā' itself supplies any movement that is to be found. It also furnished the plot to the extent that there is any. No attempt is made to recapture the normal suspense which accompanies the unfolding of everyday events. In the very first scene the end is known.

The drama is the creation of "sociological authorship." Numerous individuals acted as creative agents through their poetic contributions in commemoration of Husayn. But this poetic activity was encouraged, stimulated, checked, corrected, challenged, or endorsed by a community of listeners to which the poet addressed himself. The ta'ziyah is in large measure the creation of the common people. It has had its success on the popular level. It has come to serve the masses in giving expression to their common traditional convictions. As a grass-roots phenomenon it is not subject to any particular control, and the performance may vary considerably from area to area depending upon local customs and economic resources. Any message extracted from it will represent popular religion.

It is accordian-like in nature: its length is unpredictable. The number of scenes that any one community or group of people may present varies considerably. Scenes are not dependent upon each other. Consequently there is justification for speaking of plays[69] rather than a play or drama. The basic message is not altered by the addition or the deletion of scenes. Each scene or play carries a common message.

Under these circumstances it is quite understandable that no canonical text exists -- not even several variant texts of which one can say that they carry a kind of authoritative influence. After a comparison of texts (available in Western languages), Pelly's edition can be said to provide a fair representative text of the ta'ziyah.[70] There is, of course not always an exact correspondence between the scenes included in Pelly's collection and those of Litten's, for an example. What is of importance here is that these variations make no appreciable difference in the message that is put across. Pelly has included thirty-seven out of some fifty-two which were made available to him.[71] This is considerably more than is to be found in any other available collection. This paper, therefore, restricts itself to the Pelly edition, regarding it as a text in translation representative of what one might have heard in a performance of the ta'ziyah during the ten days of Muharram in Persia in

a period when the drama was at its height.

Sir Lewis Pelly's collection of scenes was gathered around 1865 while he was serving as the British Political Resident in Persia.

> It so happened that I was acquainted with a Persian who had long been engaged as a teacher and promoter of actors. I arranged with this man that, assisted by some of his dramatic friends, he should gradually collect and dictate all the scenes of the Hasan and Husain tragedy. This he did, and during the course of several years they were carefully written out and corrected in English by two of my assistants ... 72

They were later revised and annotated by A. N. Wollaston and finally published in 1879.[73]

CHAPTER TWO

THE DOMINANT THEMES IN THE TA'ZIYAH

A Resumé of the Scenes

The Dominant Themes

- God
- Cosmology
- The Prophet and His Family
  - Muhammad
  - 'Alī
  - Fāṭimah
  - Ḥasan
  - Ḥusayn
- Angels and Lesser Spirits
- Predestination
- Martyrdom
- Resurrection and Intercession
- Weeping and Lamentation
- Tombs and Relics
- Symbolism (Qur'ān, History, Legend)
- The Martyrdom of Ḥusayn

CHAPTER TWO

THE DOMINANT THEMES IN THE TA'ZIYAH

In this chapter attention is directed to the text of the ta'ziyah as we find it in the Pelly edition. The content will be analyzed and summarized in a discussion of the dominant themes. Before beginning with that task a resumé of each of the scenes will be given. Each resumé will be brief and without comment. This will place before us an overall view of the entire ta'ziyah. It will also indicate the kind of material the ta'ziyah utilizes. The manner in which the material is used is interesting and significant in itself. Occasionally, while discussing the dominant themes, it will be helpful to have this material as a point of reference.

A Resumé of the Scenes

I. "Joseph and his Brethren"[1]

Our version of the ta'ziyah begins with the Qur'anic version of Jacob's grief over the loss of his beloved son, Joseph.[2] Before setting out with his brethren, Joseph reminds his worried father about the patience which Husayn will display in the loss of his beloved son at Karbalā'. As Jacob anxiously grieves for the return of Joseph, he reflects on the tragedy of Karbalā'

and wishes that he and his Joseph might give themselves a thousand times as a ransom for Husayn.

II. "Death of Ibrāhīm the Son of Muhammad"

Muhammad has shown too much love and affection for Husayn and Ibrāhīm. "It is not proper there should be two loves in one heart," so Gabriel confronts Muhammad with the necessity of choosing between the two children. One will die; the other may remain. Muhammad is certain that the grief will be too much for 'Alī, Fāṭimah, and Hasan, if Husayn is taken, so Muhammad chooses to sacrifice Ibrāhīm in preference to Husayn. Ibrāhīm willingly complies in order to be one of Husayn's holy pilgrims.

III. "The Disobedient Son"

Muhammad reflects on the ultimate destiny of his people. He has been informed that on the Day of Judgment the sinners among his people shall be doomed to everlasting punishment. So grieved is he that none except Husayn can bring him out of his chamber. While Muhammad and his family pray for mercy for his people, a disobedient son is heard crying out from his grave. Muhammad, 'Alī, Fāṭimah, and Husan are unsuccessful in persuading the mother to forgive her child. Husayn succeeds and the youth praises Husayn for saving him from the fires of destruction.

IV. "Magnanimous offer of 'Alī to sacrifice his Life for a Fellow-creature"

Muhammad predicts what will happen at Karbalā', and Gabriel announces that God has chosen 'Alī to be Muhammad's successor. 'Alī is burdened with the straits of poverty that face his family; the holy family lives a very frugal existence. 'Alī takes a ride in search of food and employment. He meets a young man who is seeking to kill him. If the youth is successful in murdering 'Alī, he may have the king's daughter.

When 'Alī discovers the purpose of the youth's journey and the youth's love for his beloved, 'Alī voluntarily offers his head in spite of the young man's lack of respect for true religion. The youth is so impressed he cannot kill. He now recognizes 'Alī and becomes a Muslim.

V. "Death of the Prophet Muhammad"

Muhammad informs Husayn of the approaching experience of Karbalā'. Husayn promises to face the ordeal willingly. The Prophet transfers to 'Alī's possession, a number of special articles. Gabriel assures Muhammad that the Prophet will be made an intercessor for his people on the Day of Judgment. With this assurance Muhammad submit to the angel of death.

VI. "The Seizure of the Khalīfat by Abū Bakr"

Abū Bakr and 'Umar are unsuccessful in obtaining the allegiance of 'Alī. Their pressure tactics only foreshadow the oppression of Karbalā'.

VII. "Death of Fāṭimah, the Daughter of the Prophet Muhammad"

Fāṭimah prepares to die. She mourns the fact that she will not be present to care for her sons, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, who will soon face trial and affliction. She takes one last look at a collection of sacred articles before she dies.

VIII. "The Martyrdom of ʾAlī the Son of Abu Talib"

By dream Muhammad, in grief and sorrow over the cruelty of his people, tells 'Alī that his martyrdom is eminent and that he will defend 'Alī's cause on the Day of Judgment. Meanwhile the son of Muljam has consented to carry through the desire of his beloved to render Fāṭimah's children fatherless. 'Alī's family anticipates the tragedy with mourning and weeping, and in the course of time, 'Alī is mortally wounded while at prayer in the mosque.

IX. "The Martyrdom of Hasan the Son of ʾAlī"

Marwān , the governor of Madīnah, successfully manipulates a plot to poison Ḥasan, and Ā'yishah, the wife of Muhammad, protests the burial of Ḥasan beside the grave of Muhammad.

X. "The Martyrdom of Muslim the Envoy of Husain"

After Muslim has assured Ḥusayn that the Kūfans are sincere in their invitation, Muslim is martyred by Ibn Ziyād's

men. Muslim dies professing the faith and his loyalty to Husayn.

XI. "Murder of the Sons of Muslim"

After pitiful efforts to escape, the two innocent children of Muslim are martyred--two more victims of the sinister plot against Husayn.

XII. "The Departure of Husain from Madīnah, on his way to Kūfah"

In full knowledge of what is to happen at Karbalā', a sad city bids farewell to a grief-stricken family.

XIII. "Withdrawal of Husain from the road to Kūfah"

In an atmosphere of gloom and despair Husayn and his followers encamp and are surrounded by the advance guard of the opposing army. Hurr, the commander of the guard, softens and withdraws his men a distance making it possible for Husayn's party to escape.

XIV. "The Martyrdom of Hūr"

Husayn makes a visit to the tomb of 'Alī without the knowledge of his party; this intensifies their conviction that Karbalā' is nearby. Upon Husayn's sudden return to the group wanders on; uncanny feelings soon convince them that they have arrived at the fateful place of Karbalā'. The main army arrives

at the same time, and Hurr is reprimanded for not having fought with Husayn earlier. Hurr, his brother, and his son, cast their lot with Husayn and are happily martyred for his cause.[3]

XV. "The Martyrdom of 'Abīs and Shauzab in Defence of Husain"

Two more men desert the army in defence of Husayn and true religion and are martyred.

XVI. "A Night Assault on Husain's Camp"

The enemy challenges again and declares its intention to cut the body of Husayn into a thousand pieces.

XVII. "Death of 'Alī Akbar"

With the approval of Husayn, 'Alī Akbar, his eldest son, goes voluntarily to battle the enemy and becomes the first member of Husayn's immediate family to die for Husayn's cause. Husayn has now lost his "Joseph" at Karbalā'.

XVIII. "Death of Kāsim the Bridegroom"[4]

Kāsim, the son of Hasan, is married to Fātimah, the daughter of Husayn. That same day Kāsim becomes a martyr fighting the enemy.

XIX. "Death of 'Abbās, the Brother of Husain"

'Abbās, the standard-bearer for Husayn, goes to his martyrdom in a heroic stand against the enemy.

XX. "The Martyrdom of Hāshim"

Hāshim, who follows the "religion" of Yazīd, deserts the army and gives his life in sacrificial devotion to Husayn and the cause of true religion. "Now am I (Hāshim) happy. I have done service and am free." The angels volunteer their services, but Husayn is determined to fulfill God's destiny for him--to be a martyr for the salvation of the people from their sins.

XXI. "Rescue by Husain of Sultan Ghiyas from the jaws of a Lion"

The Sultān is on a hunting expedition and is attacked by a lion. He appeals to Husayn who is engaged on the battle-field of Karbalā'. As a true servant of his people, Husayn leaves Karbalā' and saves his friend. The lion repents of having unknowingly attack a Shī'ah and requests to be a martyr for Husayn and his cause. But animals cannot give themselves as martyrs.

XXII. "The Lamentations of Husain and His Family for the Loss of the Martyrs in Karbalā'"

This scene is given over to the anguish and grief that is displayed throughout the drama.

XXIII. "Martyrdom of Husain"

Rejoicing in tribulations knowing that they are but

temporary and achieve an eternal and blissful end, Husayn's turn now comes to offer himself. The inevitable so long predicted has now taken place. The "chief of martyrs" has voluntarily served the cause of God for the sake of the Prophet's people.

XXIV. "The Camp at Karbalā after the Death of Husain"

A distraught group of survivors fear further mistreatment and atrocities. Their agony is increased when one member is found to be missing. Their lamentations come to the attention of the spirits of 'Alī, Hasan, Fāṭimah, and Husayn; they come to guard the destitute wanderers through the night.

XXV. "The Field of Karbalā After the Death of Husain"

In this scene the enemy torments the female captives of the family of Husayn. They are chained and forced to view the mutilated bodies of their loved ones while the enemy collects the heads of seventeen which were martyred. The enemy's list of martyrs carries eighteen names; a search turns up the body of little 'Alī Asghar buried under the floor of the women's tent.

XXVI. "Flight of Shahrbānū from the Plain of Karbalā"

Shahrabānū, one of the wives of Husayn, decides to abandon the distressed camp and attempts to escape to her native land of Persia. A descendant of Persian royalty, she had been

taken to Arabia a happy little girl; she now returns a sad, old woman, having lost a husband and a child. She was also leaving behind a sick child destined to become the fourth Imām.

XXVII. "Husain's faithless Camel-driver"

Husayn's own camel-driver together with a deserter from the army of Yazīd search the martyred bodies for valuable articles. The hand of the martyred Husayn fouls all attempts of his former servant to remove a jeweled belt. In the latter half of the scene an army of the tribe of Bāni-Khuzā'ah, having received word too late to aid Husayn's party in battle, attempts to rescue the captive survivors being taken to Syria.

XXVIII. "Release of Fātimah, Owing to the intervention of the Persians"

The son of Yazdagird III raises an army to rescue his sister Shahrabānū when he hears about the atrocities of Karbalā'. By chance the prince and sister meet and at her insistence the army moves on to overtake the Syrian army and to demand the release of Fātimah, Shahrabānū's daughter. The release is accomplished without incident.

XXIX. "Despatch of Husain's Family as Captives to Syria"

The captives grieve, and the army officials irritate them while the head of the martyred Husayn exhibits mysterious behavior.

XXX. "Arrival of Husain's Family at Damascus"

The captives are delivered into the hands of Yazīd where each survivor and each head of the martyrs is identified. Gruesome details are given as to how the martyrs were beheaded. A visiting ambassador from Europe is greatly disturbed by what he sees and hears. He prepares to intercede before Yazīd on behalf of the captives.

XXXI. "Conversion and Murder of the Ambassador from Europe"

The ambassador is being entertained by Yazīd but the devilry of Karbalā' has so affected him that he cannot enter into the spirit of the occasion. Not knowing the reason for the ambassador's melancholy, Yazīd proceeds to entertain him with a review of the captives. This only serves to move him to condemn this most horrible atrocity in all history. He confesses the shahādah and is put to death by order of Yazīd.

XXXII. "Death of Rukayyah the Daughter of Husain"

The daughter of Yazīd visits the abode of the captives. Dressed in all her royal finery, she taunts the miserable captives about their condition. The lamentations of the prisoners move Yazīd's daughter to have Yazīd present the mourners with the head of Husayn. So grieved is Rukayyad, a surviving daughter

of Husayn, that she prays that she may die and go to be with her father in Paradise. After an additional prayer for the forgiveness of the sins of all who weep for her because of her sufferings, she dies.

XXXIII. "Release of Husain's Family from Captivity"

Yazīd repents and requests forgiveness. In return he is ready to offer all the treasures of his empire and more. But his request is to no avail -- "the price of the blood of the martyrs cannot be paid for in money or possessions." He grants the captives' request to return to the shrine of the Prophet in Madīnah. The scene suggests that they went by way of Karbalā'.

XXXIV. "Death of Zainab"

Madīnah welcomes the survivors and Zain-ul-'Ābid-dīn, the surviving son of Husayn, is declared the imām. It is rumored to Yazīd that the imām is setting himself up as the true Khalīfah. In retaliation Yazīd orders the captives returned to Damascus. This is too much for Zaynab, a sister of Husayn. Her prayer for death is granted. Just before she dies, she turns over a collection of priceless relics to her sister.

XXXV. "Conversion of a Christian lady to the Muhammadan Faith"

A certain Christian lady comes to Karbalā' and has a dream whereby she comes to know of the affair of Karbalā',

and the Lord Jesus orders her to embrace the religion of Muhammad. Muhammad, 'Alī, Hasan, and Fāṭimah all come to visit the mutilated body of Husayn at Karbalā'. Husayn is assured that his martyrdom has pleased God and through conversation with Fāṭimah the Christian lady professes the shahādah and becomes a Muslim.

XXXVI. "Conversion of King Caniah"

The Christian king is determined to prohibit the observance of Muharram by a group of Muslims in his land. Persecution brings Husayn on the scene; he orders angels to torment the king. The king repents and requests mercy. The request is granted upon the condition that he become a Muslim. He deserts his religion of superstition and idolatry and becomes a Muslim.

XXXVII. "The Resurrection"

God has commanded that the Day of Resurrection is to be announced. The dead come forth. Jacob, Joseph, Abraham, Ismā'īl, David, Solomon, and Noah are all only concerned with their own personal destiny. Muhammad alone begs for mercy for the sinners among his people. As the records of men's deeds are checked, humanity is being divided between Paradise and the infernal regions. Muhammad tries in vain to intercede for a group of sinners. The addition of Hasan's efforts do not change the situation. Not until Husayn also intercedes, is the decree of damnation reversed. Husayn dares to enter a plea in behalf

of the sinners on the strength of the supreme ordeal which was his at Karbalā'. The keys of Paradise are given by Gabriel to the Prophet who in turn is to hand them on to the person who has voluntarily undergone the greatest trials. Muḥammad asks the prophets and the saints to gather around him. Abraham pleads for Muḥammad to make intercession for men facing the horrors of judgment. Muḥammad declares that this assistance shall come from the one who meets the qualifications which Gabriel has announced. Jacob puts in his claim on the grounds of his excessive suffering for Joseph. Ḥusayn's claim is more impressive than any which Jacob can produce. Gabriel then declares that God has sent this message:

> None has suffered the pain and afflictions which Husain has undergone. None has, like him, been obedient in my service. As he has taken no steps save in sincerity in all that he had done, thou must put the key of Paradise in his hand. The privilege of making intercession for sinners is exclusively his. Husain is, by My peculiar grace, the mediator for all. (II 347)[5]

Ḥusayn exercises the powers of intercession for his friends, and they enter Paradise saying:

> God be praised! by Husain's grace we are made happy, and by his favour we are delivered from destruction. By Husain's loving-kindness is our path decked with roses and flowers. We were thorns and thistles, but are now made cedars owing to his merciful intercession. (II 348)

The Dominant Themes

We now turn to the important task of analyzing and summarizing the salient points in what seem to be the dominant themes in the ta'ziyah. The aim will be to keep the discussions of these themes within the confines of thought as represented in Pelly's edition. The text of the ta'ziyah is understandably charged with emotion. It no doubt draws on various literary sources as well as oral tradition. The end result is not as precise in though as might be desired. There are occasional statements which are difficult to fit into what seems to be the overall view of the ta'ziyah on a given issue. The discussions attempt to represent fairly the preponderance of material on a given issue. The ta'ziyah is also not a systematic and comprehensive presentation of whatever ideas may be important to its purpose. The discussion are therefore deliberately restricted to what the ta'ziyah would seem to legitimately allow.

God

To begin with the understanding of God is in keeping with His importance in the thought of the ta'ziyah. At the same time, God is not directly related to the story to any great degree. His involvement is by way of the Prophet, the imāms, and the angels. The implications of some of the themes to be

discussed in this chapter will be as important to the understanding of God as the direct teaching about Him. In fact the latter is relatively small.

God is most frequently addressed as the Creater. He is the cause of all that happens. (II 68) His unity is affirmed; there are no references to the finer distinctions regarding His Essence and Attributes. His power and will are more immediately carried out and expressed through the Prophet, the imāms, and the angels. All things are possible because of Him. While at times it may appear that His sovereign power is being seriously challenged, there is no doubt about His being the inevitable Conqueror. To the faithful such as Muhammad and the members of his family, He is a protector and friend. (I 31,221) He values highly the afflictions that befall His creatures in their faithfulness to His will. (I 221) What He ordains is good and is actually for the benefit of all. He always knows best. (II 49) To those who oppose Him and His will, He is the great Avenger and Judge. (I 247) The enemies of Husayn can expect to confront Him as their adversary on the Day of Judgment. (I 252)

Our version of the ta'ziyah opens with a doxology not unlike a number of similar addresses to God.

> O Cause of the existence of all things, Thou Who art omnipotent to save and help all Thy servants, Whose door of mercy is open for all! Thou art the sole

> Creator of all things, worship is due to Thee alone. Thou, being the First and the Last, mayest with propriety be called the Eternal and Everlasting God! Thou alone art able to produce day and night; thou alone knowest the secret recesses of every heart. (I 1-2)

This brief discussion has mentioned the more obvious facets of the understanding of God. Other themes to be discussed will make further contributions and lend support to what has been said.

Cosmology

There are two worlds -- the celestial world and this world. The Prophet and the imāms are essential and even necessary functionaries between the two worlds. More attention will be given to their role later. The view of this world is of major importance; it is in keeping with the atmosphere and mood that permeates the entire drama. This world is an intolerable place. (I 77) It is a place of frustrating alternations of joy and sorrow. (I 100) Marriage and death come on the same day. (II 5-6) One cannot rely on either the old or the new in this world. (II 91) It is a prison--a perishable habitation. (I 86, 139, 167, 273,288) Under the strain of one tragedy after another, the family of the Prophet find death to be good news. (I 139, 177) It brings release from the miseries of this world. (I 147, 162, 249) Death is preferred because it brings rest and peace. (I 72, 82,

163, II 38) It also makes possible a reunion with loved ones who have previously died. (II 101) Sometimes opportunity for immediate reunion seems to be limited to the Prophet and his immediate family. Others may experience rest and peace, but they will have to wait until the Resurrection for reunion with loved ones; (I 298, II 27) but on this point there appears to be no consistency. (I 189) The household of the Prophet, in particular, does not seek after the things which this world offers. Muhammad himself concurs in a gloomy verdict of life in this world.

> Eternity is but a matter of time for all, to be sure. Fate's cup-bearer has in his diversified cups no draught which is everlasting. The world is a vast empire void of all order. Under the roof of this pillarless vault, no palate ever tasted the sweets of life but it must soon be embittered with death. My body is wasting rapidly from the vehemence of the fever, and my health is speedily declining. Me thinks my time is finished; my moon is about to wane forever. Come, dear daughter Fāṭimah! thy father is seized with fever; death, even death, will be the ultimate result, that is all! (I 72)

As we proceed we will find that other ideas support and clarify this pessimistic view of the world.

The Prophet and His Family

The Prophet and his family are the main figures around which everything revolves in the ta'ziyah. Consequently what is discussed here is of vital importance to its understanding.

Muhammad, 'Alī, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn are the five persons who make up the inner circle of the household. After having discussed each of the five members, there will be some observations to make on the family as a whole.

Muhammad

Muhammad is the most important member in rank and function. He is the Arabian Prophet. (I 141, 148) The Resurrection scene suggests that he is the last of a series of Prophets. He is the "seal of the Prophets," (I 78, 169) and the most significant of the line of Prophets. (I 63) He is the friend of God. Ibrāhīm reads a passage from the Qur'ān in which the role of the Prophet is explained.

> O Prophet, verily we have sent thee to be a witness, a bearer of good tidings, a denouncer of threats, an inviter unto God (through His permission), and a shining light. Bear glad news, therefore, unto the true believers, that they shall receive abundance from God. (I 24-25) 6

Muhammad obviously fulfills an important function as a link between God and this world. (I 72) A favorite way of expressing this is through the analogy of light. He is the sun of the world or a magnified moon. (I 84) He is like a mirror reflecting God's "perspicuous light" into the world. (I 62) By the message which God has given the Prophet, the earth is turned into heaven. (I 25) As he reflects the light of God, men's minds

are enlightened, (I 25) and their hearts are illuminated. (I 43) Without the Prophet creation is meaningless and lost. This seems to be what is implied when it is said that he is "the cause of the creation of all possible things." (I 34, 164)

Muhammad is the Prophet of all mankind, the Universal Prophet. (I 34, 111) He is the best of all of God's creature; (I 32, II 43) hence, the model of true piety and religion. (I 86) He is infallible and sinless. (I 63, 83) He is good in all his actions. (I 34) His disposition is noted for its generosity. (I 34) A pronounced interest of the Prophet is his concern for his people on the Day of Judgment. (I 86) The tyranny and injustice of his people continually grieves him in this world and in the next. (I 86) He will be the intercessor and advocate for all nations. (I 34, 86, 111) He desires to bear all the afflictions and trials of his followers at the time of their death. Since death is really welcomed by the holy family, (I 84) and they are sinless and would not be subject to the trials that accompany death, Muhammad's desire seems to imply that death itself is a part of a process of punishment and purification in the case of sinners.[7]

Muhammad is acquainted with "all the mysteries of truth," (I 89) and before he dies he instructs 'Alī in these truths. (I 77) Among them is the knowledge of the sufferings

that the family shall face from the murder of 'Alī to the atrocities of Karbalā'. (I 74, 87) In keeping with his essential function as an intermediary between the Creator and this world, his death is an event which affects the whole cosmos. (I 86)

'Alī

The traditional view of the Shī'ah is that 'Alī was the legitimate successor to Muhammad. This is an important issue in the ta'ziyah, and authority for the view is backed by God's own word and choice. 'Alī is Murtaza, God's chosen.

> Gabriel (to Muhammad). -- Peace be on thee, O sphere of generosity! the gracious Creator, greeting thee, says: "'Alī, being my peculiar servant, I have made him My own vicegerent and thy successor. I swear by My own God-head, by My knowledge, long-suffering, and sovereignty, that if the Prophet had continued to put fresh dates in 'Alī's mouth until the Day of Resurrection, I would each time, with manifest grace, have said, 'May it be agreeable to thee, O 'Alī!'" (I 64)

Upon the death of Muhammad, 'Alī becomes the chief functionary by which a vital connection between God and the world is maintained. Men's response to God is reflected in their response to 'Alī.

> If the inhabitants of the earth knew 'Alī's position as the dwellers in heaven are aware of his excellency, and were they to love him in the same way, the Maker of heaven and earth would not have created everlasting fire at all. (I 64)

Because of 'Alī's importance to the world it is said of him,

as it was said of Muhammad, that he "is the one for whom all things were created." (I 108) He is the "hand of God" in the world. (I 112, 123, 264) This probably means that God exercised His strength in the world through 'Alī.

'Alī is also called a moon-like sun, (I 109, 124) or he can be called a mirror (I 123) enlightening the earth. (I 135) He is likewise near to God and the friend of God. (I 76, 111)

What the above means is that 'Alī is the "Imam of the Age." (I 70, 145, 148) As such he is the champion of true religion (I 67, 134, 145, 148, 149) and the tribunal of justice and faith. (I 123) The angels model their behaviour after that of 'Alī. (I 145) 'Alī protects and guides creation, which is in bondage. He is, however, free (I 76) and has the authority to exercise divine power in the earth upon permission from God. (I 105,121) He is the "central force of the divine system of might and power." (I 122)

'Alī has a reputation as a great warrior; (I 67) this seems to have something to do with his most common epithet, the Lion. (I 39, 106, 121, 147, 148)

He is also known for his magnamimity and generosity. (I 69, 124) He is the "asylum" of the destitute and the "ointment" of the wounded in heart. (I 126, 141) His benevolent interest in others suggests one reason for his poverty. (I 60, 77) He is known for his ascetic tendencies. (I 92)

'Alī is a depository of divine knowledge, (I 93, 124, 142) and one indication of it is his ability to inform his family of the real state of affairs that faces the household. (I 94, 95, 97-99) Before he dies he conveys special knowledge to Hasan.

> O thou tender plant of the garden of Time's glory, thou brightness of my tearful eyes, Hasan, come to me, that I may commit unto thee the secret knowledge of the Imāmat, or priesthood. Come, let me put my lips to thy delicate lips, and deliver the mystery of religion in this way to thy heart. Thou are the guide of men after me, O my successor! Perform the rites of Imāmat for the people after my departure. (I 151)

'Ali seeks forgiveness for the Shī'ah (I 134, 152) on the Day of Judgment. He dies a martyr--the victim of tyranny and injustice. For this sacrifice he will be a means of salvation to the Prophet's people, for he will be their intercessor on the Day of Judgment. (I 87, 136)

The relation of 'Alī to Muhammad is often an ambiguous position in Shī'ī literature. For this reason it is pursued a bit further according to the view of the ta'ziyah. What has been said above might leave the impression that 'Alī is equal to the Prophet. We shall observe that this will also be the impression in the case of Hasan and Husayn.

Muhammad is the Prophet; as the Prophet's successor, 'Alī is an imām. It may be correct to say that 'Alī is the wasī to the Prophet as well as an imām. Our version does not

use this term but this may be the idea behind the words, "... for he is the true successor of the Prophet, and his vicar." (I 107)

God is not alone in declaring that 'Alī is to be the successor to the Prophet. Muhammad declares it and defends it according to the ta'ziyah. (I 74, 79, 107) Muhammad has no more faithful friend than 'Alī. (I 79) It is as though there were an inseparable relationship between the members of the holy family, (I 53) and the relation between 'Alī and Muhammad is expressed by the Prophet in these words:

> Sit down before Muhammad. May thy father be a ransom for thee! Thou art for me, as I am for thee; let us not be separated the one from the other. Thou, O 'Alī, standest alone in the age as regards thy faith; thou shalt be a martyr through oppression and cruelty. None, O 'Alī, has been created equal to thee; none has ever existed thy match in the world. (I 53, 107)

The status of 'Alī and his relationship to the Prophet is occasionally expressed in the shahādah in the Shī'ī form.

> I declare that there is no other God but God, that Muhammad is His Prophet, and 'Alī His vice-regent. (I 70, II 300-301)

'Alī frequently declares that he is nothing but a slave of the Prophet.

> Think not, O Prophet, that I am a dear cousin to thee; I swear by the dust of thy feet that I am but thy slave. (I 137, 53)

We do find an inseparable "institution" made up of the Prophet and the subsequent imāms functioning as an absolute necessity

between God and the earth. Within this divinely appointed and endowed family line there exists a respect, an intimacy, and a dependency as though they were all members of the same body. (I 137-138) But within this "institution" there is a recognizable line of function and sequence. No one threatens Muḥammad's priority of position and function. (I 170)

Fāṭimah

No important person in the drama is without his or her share of appellations, and Fāṭimah is the most important woman in the drama. She stands among illustrious company as the daughter of the Prophet, the wife of 'Alī, and the mother of two imāms, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. To a great extent, what can be said about anyone of these can be said about her.

Fāṭimah is a model of chastity and modesty. (I 48, 105) She is the best of women. (I 83, 49, 131, 136) She too possesses the characteristic of brightness; she is commonly referred to as Zahrah, (I 22, 63, 129) In grace, dignity, and position she is compared to Mary the mother of Jesus (I 59) and is frequently called the Virgin. (I 57, 123, 139, 153) The symbolism of the firmament is also applied to her: "O thou Venus of the Heavens, who are the sun surrounded by two moons and one star!"[8] (I 114) She possesses power to subvert the heavens. "With one curse

I can destroy the whole world, and the inhabitants thereof, not leaving any trace of heaven, the fixed stars, and the planets." (I 109) She is a part of the important "institution" which links heaven and earth. Her sorrow affects the nymphs of Paradise who are her slaves. (I 119)

Fāṭimah dies from grief over the death of her father. She continues, like all the members of the household, to take a prominent part in the affairs of Karbalā' even after her death. She is particularly influential in the conversion of a Christian lady, and in that scene she appears accompanied by four other women: Khadījah, her mother; the Virgin Mary; the wife of Pharaoh; and Eve, the wife of Adam. (II 299)

Hasan

Hasan was the eldest son of 'Alī and Fāṭimah and according to Shī'ī tradition became the imām on the death of 'Alī. The ta'ziyah affirms this tradition. Prior to his death 'Alī committed the special knowledge of the imāmate to Hasan. (I 151)

In the ta'ziyah Hasan suffers by comparison with his father and his brother, Husayn, in the attention he receives. But this is not to be taken to mean that he was any less an imām. The description that is given supports the conclusion that he is co-equal with the rest. In many cases Hasan and Husayn

are mentioned in the same appellation. Particularly precious are traditions that present Muhammad as fond of his two grandsons. They are "two tender plants of the Prophet's garden," "ornaments of the bosom of Muhammad, the Arabian." (I 148, 149) As a child Hasan rode on the shoulder of Muhammad. (I 169) The following illustrates this intimate and fond relation between the Prophet and his grandsons.

> The Envoy.--How can I tell thee, O Yazīd, what I saw? Then the Arabian Prophet turned to Hasan, saying, "Hasan, hear what thy grandfather tells thee. Come forward, and wrestle, in a brotherly way, with Husain thy brother." Then the two tender plants of the rose-garden of Haidar the warrior took each other's hands lovingly, and began to wrestle. When these two young shoots of the red rose were twining with one another, each striving to throw his opponent, the Prophet said to Hasan, "Child, manage to hold Husain's leg, and trip him." On hearing which, Fātimah their mother, who was present, exclaimed, "Father, thou honourable Messenger of God, tell me, why dost thou not instruct Husain to trip Hasan?" The trustee of God's revelation answered, "Dear Fātimah, be not offended, Husain has another to encourage him, namely, Gabriel, who is constantly teaching him how to move Hasan from his feet, and trip him up." ... (II 238)

Hasan is referred to as a celestial body. He is a bright moon (I 157)-- a star in a heavenly station. (I 155) He is an ornament of God's glorious throne. (I 156) To kill him will "eclipse the solar orb." (I 155) This is an allusion to the cosmic implication which result from the killing of one who has such a vital and necessary function as an imām. Before

he dies, Ḥasan has many things to tell the new protector, the new imām, Ḥusayn. (I 160, 163)

Ḥusayn

Ḥusayn is the fifth member of the quintuplet of the household of the Prophet. As the second son of 'Alī and Fāṭimah and the precious grandson of the Prophet, he succeeded Ḥasan as the "Imām of the Age." As a child Gabriel had rocked his cradle. (II 43) Muḥammad had kissed and caressed the very throat that was later severed by the enemy at Karbalā'. (I 230-31, 251) The Prophet had declared that he "was of Ḥusayn and Ḥusain was of him." (II 43, 239) His love for Ḥusayn was as dear as his love for the life in his own body. The tongue of Ḥusayn is the tongue of the Prophet. (I 73)

As the "Imam of the Age," (I 214) he serves as the necessary functionary between God and the world. He was now the shāh of faith. (I 215, 237, II 3, 46) He was the true follower of the Prophet's religion. (II 32, 43) Like 'Alī and Ḥasan before him, Ḥusayn was the similitude of the Prophet. (II 19) He had become the heir of 'Alī's office. (II 32) We have noted that the importance and function of the imāms has been expressed in terms of light and by reference to them as celestial bodies. Ḥusayn is no exception. (I 212, 214, 226, 230, II 19) His relation

to God is expressed in intimate terms; he too is a friend of God. (II 49) He possesses special knowledge like his predecessors. (I 172, II 100-101)

His character is without blemish. He cannot be accused of any sin. (II 82) He truly belongs to the line of the illustrious ones of God.

> O thou who as regards miracles art like Christ, and as concerns signs and wonders resemblest Moses; O thou who in dignity and honour art equal to Muhammad; may I be offered for thee, why groanest thou like one seized with fever? O glorious as Solomon, handsome as Joseph, and brave as 'Alī the elect, ... (I 243)

He is a paragon of virtue. His generosity is demonstrated in the midst of the crisis of Karbalā' when he offers water to the enemy when he and his own party are dying of thirst. (I 230)

Husayn is very sensitive to the sufferings and trials which befall others. (I 214, 215, II 26) As is true of the other four special members of the Household, Husayn shows deep concern for the people's destiny on the Day of Judgment.

Since the ta'ziyah commemorates the event of Karbalā', Husayn is the central figure in the drama. One cannot begin to include here all the hundreds of appellations which are assigned to him. At the close of this chapter we will return to Husayn and his importance in the ta'ziyah. There we can complete his characterization against the background of a discussion of other dominant themes in the ta'ziyah.

There are a host of kin, followers, and friends that have a role in the tragic experiences of the persons with whom we have been concerned. The consideration here of these lesser persons would not add appreciably to the previous discussion. Some of them resemble the members of the holy family to a great degree. (I 175, 179, 200, 203) In general they typify the proper devotional and sacrificial response appropriate to the status and function that the house of the Prophet holds and deserves in the light of God's design and will.

We have noted that all five members are characterized with remarkable similarity. That in itself seems to underscore the homologous way in which the ta'ziyah preserves a rememberance of the House, and the authoritative and consistent way in which God is understood to guide His creation. An outsider witnessing the ta'ziyah is apt to find the members faceless because they are so much alike. They are symbolically called roses, cypress trees, or celestial bodies. Each one reflects the divine radiance of God into the world. A store of special knowledge is faithfully passed from one to another indicating a recognized line of sequence and function. They are all paragons of virtue. Their interests are not with this world except in so far as they give themselves

in utter devotion to the cause of true religion. They follow an ascetic way of life. Life is full of trials and tribulations for each of them. They willingly accept their lot expressing one common concern--that the sinners among their people may be forgiven on the Day of Judgment. This they seek to accomplish through the act of intercession. To qualify for this position the death of a martyr is willingly and happily accepted.

Angels and Lesser Spirits

Angels are another important category of participants in the story which the ta'ziyah has to tell. Like everyone in the drama who has any sensitivities for God's will, they exist to praise, serve, and obey. They are always available for duty responding to the biddings of God, the Prophet, and his family. (I 128) They serve with empathy in the historical tragedies. They give cosmic coverage to the historical events. They join the earthly chorus in weeping and lamentation. Before God they intercede for mercy, aid, and instruction on behalf of the family. They model their behavior after the lives of the household of the Prophet. (I 145)

The principal angels are Gabriel, Michael, Sarāfīl, and 'Izrāīl. Gabriel and Michael perform general service. Gabriel is the angelic minister of the heavenly court, and he

is the most prominent angelic participant in the drama. Michael would appear to be his subordinate aid. Sometimes Sarāfīl [or Isrāfīl] performs general service, for example, like "wishing Husain a happy digestion." But his specific role is to announce the Day of Resurrection and Judgment, at the moment God has decreed it. 'Izraīl is the angel of death and commands a simultaneous view of East and West. He comes to take the soul of those for whom God has sent. He is especially gentle with those who have been the friends of Husayn--those who have observed the occasions of mourning and have weeped for him. (I 31) For those who find the moment of death difficult, he gently offers a perfumed apple, presumably to ease the ordeal.[9] (I 31) When the decree of God sent him to take Muhammad from this world, 'Izraīl was instructed by Gabriel not to take the esteemed Prophet without Muhammad's consent. (I 83) Muhammad with calm resignation requested only enough time to receive from Gabriel some confirmation from God that his people might be assured of salvation, and to request of 'Alī that when the time came, he would submit voluntarily to martyrdom for the sake of his people, so that 'Alī might qualify as an intercessor for them. (I 87)

There are references to angels other than these four; usually they are given no specific names. For example, there are some "tormenting angels" who heed Husayn's order to torment

King Caniah, who is willfully mistreating some followers of Husayn. In the Resurrection scene the "guardian of Paradise" is commanded by Gabriel to make Paradise ready for those who have offered their lives in devotion to God, although Gabriel did this himself in preparation for Muhammad's arrival. (I 86) There is also a "keeper of the Infernal Regions." In the midst of the tragedy of Karbalā' the angels become so disturbed at the turn of events that they come offering to fight for Husayn. Their spokesman is an angel called Futrus. Since they seem to be unaware of the meaning of what is happening, Husayn gives Futrus a tour of the battlefield with a commentary on each of those already martyred for his cause, but Husayn declines their offer of assistance.

> O ye assembly of angels, whose eyes are moist with weeping, ye seem to be unaware of the secret of this matter. The Lord is my protector and friend in this calamity, and He alone. If you destroy the enemy and take vengence, what benefit can it be now? The work that I had to do is well-nigh finished. (II 49)

Some lesser spirits are frequently called the "nymphs of Paradise." Their role does not differ from the general role that angels play in the drama. Some of them are identified as belonging to certain companions of the Prophet. Salīnah belongs to Salmān, Makdūdah belongs to Mikdad, and Izār belongs to Abazar. (I 120) When questioned by Fāṭimah if there are better nymphs in Paradise than these, an angel replies, "Know thou that they belong chiefly

to the sympathizers with Husain" and also "to those who truly weep for Husain." (I 119 ff.) The jinn are also represented, primarily in the scene on the martyrdom of Husayn. (II 98ff.) Like the angels, mentioned above, the jinn were restless over what was happening at Karbalā'. Ja'far, their king, came offering an army possessed of "various abilities and qualifications." Husayn gave him essentially the same answer he gave to Futrus, the angel.

There is one single reference to an angel named Hātif who informs Husayn in the midst of the pressures of Karbalā' about his devoted friend, Sultān Ghiyās of Hind who, on a hunting trip, is threatened by a lion. (II 54 ff) The immortal Khadir is mentioned, but usually as a symbol of guidance and aid. (II 140, 148, 340)

Predestination

The complex subject of predestination stands out as a key idea in the drama. One would not expect any entanglement in the subtleties of this doctrine in a "creation" of this kind. Nevertheless, there are straight-forward affirmations related to this subject on nearly every page, and they add up to something more than a naivé and simple version of predestination. Here we want to present the main points and to see what kind of understanding lies back of them.

First of all, there is an "eternal" preoccupation with persecution, suffering, and death. It "colors" every scene that is presented. This is the inevitable experience for each member of the holy family with the possible exception of Muhammad. But even he is burdened with disappointment over his people and faces decisions which demand real sacrifice. It is a foregone conclusion at the opening scene that the Prophet and his family can expect to be humiliated, mistreated, disappointed, poisoned, or murdered. In the light of the family's unity, togetherness, intimate relationship of devotion and self-sacrifice, these tragic destinies are experienced as dreadful separation, loneliness, captivity, and exile. This is the cry as the holy community is martyred one by one. It is precisely this process of depicting the tragic experience of one individual at a time that makes the drama practically endless in length. This is the reason why the ta'ziyah can be cut or lengthened with no serious consequence in terms of its message and purpose.

The note of tragedy is made obvious through the stark contrast of good and evil, joy and sorrow. It is the best of times; it is the worst of times. A man weds and is murdered on the same day. Youth in full-bloom with all the potentials for the highest men can imagine are cut down, agonizingly slow, one by one. What can the surviving members do but weep and lament!

The future is never an unknown. It is destined to be more of today and yesterday. There is nothing new under the sun. No attempt is made to recapture the normal suspense and uncertainty that accompanies historical events. This attitude is, however, quite consistent with the conviction that the Prophet and the imāms are illuminated by divine truth. They share in the knowledge of God, so there is no reason why they should not know what life holds for them. It also follows that earlier illustrious forebearers of Muhammad and his family would have a knowledge of such a tragic event to come. It would be unusual then if Jacob and Joseph were not to see their own experience of sorrow in the light of the most horrible tragedy, Karbalā'.

> May thy father be a sacrifice for thy coat, my son! May he bleed at heart in sorrow for thee, my son! O Lord God, although I know that no wolf has eaten my Joseph, still I am extremely moved at the sight of his foully stained coat. I wonder what will be the feelings of Fātimah, the mother of Husain, when she sees her son's blood-stained torn coat or shirt after he shall have been put to death in a most cruel manner? O Lord God! for the merit of the blood of Husain's son, 'Alī Akbar, for the righteousness of his own brother 'Abbās, enable me to see my Joseph another time, and let not my anguished heart be scarred by perpetual separation from him. (I 16-17)

All this implies what was affirmed earlier under the understanding of God. God is the Cause of all that happens. What has happened and what will happen is His will. All the sorrow and loss that befalls the family is understood to be

within the will of God. These statements are presented as typical of a dominant theme.

> ...since all is done by God's order, I shall patiently submit my neck to the fetter, although I am called a lion. (I 106)

> Whatever happens by God's decrees, I cannot, dear child, but assent thereto. (I 142)

> ...for what God has willed, that must be done; and what the Prophet has said, that must be fulfilled. (I 170)

> O sister, it is so predestined, they shall sever my head from the body. The sea of my trouble is without a coast, and I see no remedy besides resignation to the will of God. When I leave this perishable world, thou must try to resign thyself with patience as far as thou canst. Take care, worthy sister, not to curse any infidel! (I 288)

> Thus was it predestined by God that thou shouldst become fatherless, destitute, and helpless, ... (II 269)

Does this mean that the family is a mere puppet in the hand of God? Hardly, for the above declarations are balanced with recurring declarations of voluntary choice and submission to whatever God's will holds for them. This attitude is in accord with the idea that the family is the epitome of obedience to God's will. They go voluntarily with patience to their destiny (martyrdom), and express a sense of personal satisfaction and purpose.

> I am going voluntarily to Muhammad the Messenger of God, I therefore say that I am bearing witness to the truth that there is no God but the one God! (I 189)

> Praise be to God! I was sorrowful, now am I happy, I have done service and am free. I have become the

> enemy of the faithless son of Ziyād, and a friend of the warlike Haidar. (II 43)
>
> I voluntarily submitted to the Divine will in suffering my head to be cut off. (II 319)
>
> We have received a peculiar grace from God not to complain of such trials and afflictions at all. (I 74)
>
> ... for thou wilt find out that the blessings of heaven consist in patience. (I 75)
>
> Mourn not for my misfortune, but bear it patiently, with out giving occasion to the enemy to rejoice triumphantly on this account, or speak reproachfully concerning us. (II 85)
>
> ..., the reward of the patient believers is the best of all. (II 93)
>
> Go now where thou mayest find security, for to be slain in the cause of God is my work. (II 59)
>
> I die parched, and offer myself a sacrifice for the sins of my people, that they should be saved from the wrath to come. (II 97)

If God is the Cause of all that happens, what about the activity of the tyrannical, unjust infidels who oppose the family of the Prophet? Have they any choice concerning what they do? They are presented as willfully and knowingly opposing God's will.

> O friends, seeing our custom is to oppress and to do injustice, put Salman, therefore, in bonds in the most cruel manner possible. (I 108)
>
> I am a reprobate person, more wicked than Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord! I pretend to Husain when I entered the town; but everybody knows that I am not. I am, on the contrary, the destroyer of his peace

> and happiness. Go on beating drums and proclaiming a feast-day, and let all the people say, "God save Yazīd the King! (I 177-178)
>
> I have nothing to do with thy father and the Day of Judgment, nor do I care about the fires of the abode of the lost, or its consuming flames. Bring me the heads of the martyrs, that I may entertain my new guest with the pleasing sight. (II 212)

Unless the enemy comes under the spell of the charismatic character of a member of the family, they always represent the most debase persons one could meet--just the opposite of the holy family. Whereas the family voluntarily chooses the path of self-sacrifice, the opposition chooses selfishly and cruelly.

There is another kind of idea in the drama that is as prevalent as "what happens is God's decree." This idea appears in words like: "Today heaven is going to put bonds of cruelty round my throat." (I 96) "The spheres will make our rose-garden to wither." (I 97) "Time has undone Hasan, thy brother." (I 158) "O heaven, why bringest thou new troubles upon me." (I 163) "Why, O heaven, dost thou so much oppose the household of God's Prophet?" (I 191) "Fate, in this journey, will release us from the confinement of this world; Destiny's hand will pass us soon from humility to exaltation." (I 224) These references to the decrees of Time, Heaven, Spheres, and Fate would suggest an evil cosmic force at work. At the same time the ta'ziyah is unequivocal in declaring the unity and oneness of God. What these vague

forces do is always directly related to the oppression of the Kūfans and the Syrian army. All this may well be a way of simply expressing the cosmic dimensions of the injustice that is experienced in this world. The Karbalā' event is tragic for both worlds. How ridiculous if Karbalā' were only a contest between the Almighty God and the army of Yazīd! This is the battle between Good and Evil. Perhaps Husayn is saying something along the lines of the explanation above when he says:

> Such a luminous work could not proceed from this mean people alone. It is certainly heaven's decree and cannot be reversed. Out upon thy foul dealings, O perverse heavens! Yet I must not let the idea of martyrdom go from my head. (I 284-285)

Certainly the reality of evil is affirmed throughout the drama. Hope, confidence, joy, and purpose spring from the conviction that God is the ultimate Conqueror.

I suggest that we have here a view of predestination not unlike a tenth century Shī'ī creed offers on the Karbalā' event. God did not desire the murder of Husayn.

> ...But we say that Allah desired that the sin of the sinners should be contradistinguished from the obedience of those that obey, that He desired that sins, viewed as actions, should not be ascribed to Him, but that the knowledge of these sins may be ascribed to Him, even before the commission thereof.
>
> And we hold that Allah's wish was that the murder of Husayn should be a sin against Him and the opposite of obedience. And we say that Allah intended that his (Husayn's) murder should be prohibited, and something which was not commanded. And we say that his murder was something that was disliked and not approved; and

> we say that his murder was the cause of Allah's displeasure and it was not the cause of His approval, and that Allah the Mighty and Glorious did not desire to prevent his murder by means of (His) compulsion or power, but merely by prohibition and word. And if He had prohibited it by (His) compulsion and power, even as he prevented it by prohibition and word, surely he would have escaped being murdered, just as Abraham was saved from the fire, when Allah, the most Exalted, said to the fire in which he (Abraham) was thrown: "O fire, be coolness and peace for Abraham."
>
> And we say that Allah always knew that Husayn would be killed by force, and by such death, attain everlasting merit, and his murderer, everlasting wretchedness. We hold that what Allah wills, happens; and what He willeth not, will not happen ... 10

Martyrdom

The ta'ziyah can never be rightfully understood apart from the idea of martyrdom. The consideration of this idea follows logically from what has been said about predestination. We will want to discuss the concept more fully in the next chapter; here we want to establish its importance to the drama's message and thought.

All the tragedies to which the ta'ziyah refers are understood in the light of martyrdom. Without forgetting what we have said about the idea of predestination, it has to be said that all that happens is in accord with God's will. Nothing is so important as to be obedient in the fulfillment of His will. The faithful man gives himself obediently without reservation. God is master and the faithful understand themselves

as His slaves. Given the relation which exists between God and the household of the Prophet, devotion can also be expressed in terms of sacrifice for members of the family. For example, to die for Husayn amounts to dying for God's sake. By the same token an attack on Muhammad or 'Alī, for an example, is an attack against God and the universe. The Prophet and his family, as well as those who rightfully regard them for what they are, form an inseparable family for which death itself is not too high a price to pay when that family, and especially what it represents, is threatened. The point should not be overlooked that this includes the willingness of the family to sacrifice itself for the sake of the people. So from the first scene to the last, the idea of martyrdom is always implicit if not explicit.

These statements represent the way in which the concept is expressed in the text.

> If I were able to possess a thousand souls in this life I would willingly offer all as a sacrifice for thy people's sake, especially to one that weeps for Hasan and Husain, and spends his pearly tears for the latter. (I 54)

> Peradventure thy martyrdom will be the means of salvation to my people, in raising thee to the high office of intercessor for them. (I 87)

> Martyrdom is to me much pleasanter than this abasement of soul. Yea, death is a thousand times sweeter than the bitter life I live. (II 4-5)

> Martyrdom is, in fact, one of the glories of my faith. (II 98)

> Martyrdom is the heritage of my forefather. (II 32)
>
> Martyrdom is indeed thy crown; trials bring thee near to God and establish a close union between Him and thee. (II 343)
>
> (Other references - I 69, 88, 100, 211, 251, II 16, 23, 26, 40, 86, 101, 292)

Resurrection and Intercession

The Day of Resurrection and Judgment is inevitable. A number of times we have noted a concern for the well-being of God's people on that Day of Judgment. The entire family of the Prophet is burdened with this concern, and it follows that the concept of martyrdom is integrally related to their interest.

It is the idea of intercession and the position of intercessor that relates martyrdom to the people's ultimate destiny. Unreserved obedience merits for Muhammad, 'Alī, and the imāms a place in Paradise. It does the same for those who are martyred in their behalf. But the power of intercession is the privilege of a select few. Muhammad appears to have this privilege. The imāms seek to qualify for the position of interceding for the people on the Day of Resurrection and Judgment in order that the people may be saved from their sins. The position of intercessor is their recompense for martyrdom. (I 87, 100, 292, II 260-61) We shall return to this concept in the

next chapter, for it is one of the most salient concepts in the message of the ta'ziyah.

Weeping and Lamentation

Weeping and cries of lamentation are the chief activities of the actors in the presentation of the ta'ziyah. These expressions may be considered as very natural emotional responses to the experiences of sorrow and grief over the loss of loved ones so close and so dear to one another as they are in the family of the Prophet. (I 140, 142, 143, 149, 158, 163)

However, special importance is attached to these expressions. The members of the family consider it very important to have someone available to mourn for them as they go forth to their martyrdom. (I 183) The surviving members take seriously their obligation to express their grief. Usually the lead in this obligation is taken by the person who is the nearest living relative. Mourning is also indicative of a spirit of love, resignation, and patience. A desire for bitter retaliation is not characteristic of the household. Expressions of grief are an effective way to announce a tragic event. Weeping is contagious; Heaven and Earth are alerted by these laments. (II 38, 201, 305) They may serve to call in the assistance of the angels, the Prophet, Fāṭimah, or one of the imāms. (II 57) Their previous

death does not hinder their ability to offer companionship and assistance. Mourning has a way of disturbing the peace and confronting men with the necessity of giving serious thought to what is happening, as well as to what has happened. Lamentations may soften someone's heart. Several conversions were made in this way. Even if no one responds in a positive way, mourning can turn the world upside down; (II 200) how fitting that is as a consequence to the horrible crime that has taken place. Men ought also to weep because the illustrious ones do so. Husayn weeps for those who weep for him. (II 320) Moses and Jesus shed tears for the martyrs of Karbalā'. (II 1)

In the course of the presentation of the ta'ziyah we see that the activity of mourning is understood as obedience to a command to weep and lament. Deliberate efforts are made to set up lamentations for the martyrs. (II 323) The scene, "Conversion of King Caniah," is most interesting in this connection. King Caniah is a Christian who is suppressing a group of Muslims who are commemorating Muharram. The opening conversation merits inclusion here for the light it sheds on the Muharram festival.

> A Leading Musulman.--Dearly beloved friends, Muharram, the appointed month for mourning, is come. You must be dressed in black to indicate your sad state of mind. You ought to call your companions to places for lamentation, and make therein a melancholy noise in the commemoration of the death of Husain, the King of Karbalā. You should always remember his sad end, and shed tears of affection for him, persuading at the same time other people to do the same.

The Mourners.--O ye followers of 'Alī, lament for Husain, his beloved son, for ye must know at the same time, dearly beloved, that this is the month of affliction and sorrow. Dear friends, since Husain died, thirsting, for the sake of you, his people, it is but just that you should, in return, thirst after him, and weep on his behalf.

The Musulman's Wife.--O man, if thou indeed expectest that Muhammad the chosen of God should make intercession for thee in the Day of Judgment, hasten to commemorate the death of Husain his grandson. Go, therefore, with haste, O happiest man, and get us some of those who can sing out this mournful event well, that we may remember young 'Alī Akbar, the lovely son of Husain, and weep for him; and that thinking over the piteous state of his helpless family, we may beat our heads.

The Musulman.--O dear wife, go on bewailing and sorrowing for Husain's sake; cease not to shed heartfelt tears, thereby you may affect others. Let a house of mourning be put in order for Husain. Burn incense in censors, and fill the bottles with rose-water. Come, wife, take a large basin full of water, and put it in the corner of the court-yard in rememberance that Husain died with parched lips. Let the platform for the singers be covered with black cloth, and sigh on thou, sadly. Let all those who hear thee groan cry and lament piteously.

The Wife of the Musulman (to her husband).--Go forth now, O man, thou lover of Husain, the slain king, and get a good singer to celebrate the death of that great personage; for men and women, small and great, are coming in crowds, all shedding, as it were, blood from their eyes instead of tears.

The Musulman.--Peace be on you from me, O ye assembly of singers! it is the month to lament for Husain, the King of Karbalā. Come on, therefore, to the pulpit of his sorrow, and hoist up there, zealously, the flag of lamentation for him.

A Mourner.--Let my tears be put in a bottle to be remembered!

The Musulman's Wife.--I am pouring water into the basin, remembering how thy lips were parched with thirst!

The Mourner's Wife.--O heaven, why did you bring to pass such great oppression?

The Singer (addressing the Musulman).--O thou lover of Muhammad the beloved of God, peace be on thee! Be pleased to direct me to the house of lamentation. I, too, am very sorry for what Husain, the king of God's martyrs, has suffered, and take great delight in singing elegies for him in the town.

The Musulman.--Be it known unto you, O women assembled in this house of mourning, that the time has come for you to listen attentively to the commemoration of the death of the lord of the martyrs. All of you must come forth to the scene of its performance, and let tears run down your cheeks for this sad event. (Two Singers ascend the platform and sing in turns.) (II pp. 305-308; the script has been abbreviated by the omission of some parts.)

In an earlier scene this conversation takes place:

The Imam [Husayn].--O my family, I have an injunction to make. Praise God, O all my household, I know that ye will return to Madīnah. Give my salutations to all my friends. Wherever my followers drink cool water, let them remember the dry throats of my orphans. Whereever ye may see strangers, O Shī'ahs, bring to mind the fact of myself and these children in a strange land.

Zainab.--When thou art seated with Hasan in thy lofty place in Paradise, think of the broken-hearted Zain-ul-'Abid-dīn. When thou reclinest on the pillows of green silk to rest thyself, bear in mind the stones under the head of the orphans. When thou drinkest of the cool water of Kausar, bring to mind the dry throats of my orphans. (II 64-65)

The quotations refer to some of the interesting features associated with the Muharram festivities such as the distribution

of drinks and the collection of tears which are believed by some to have medicinal value.[11] More significantly, the conversation indicates the reason for the presentation of the ta'ziyah. These passages suggest that the ta'ziyah is in itself an expression of lamentation and is meant to provoke expressions of grief and sorrow. (I 209) Such expressions have special merit. On the Day of Resurrection Muhammad declares to Husayn:

> ...Go thou and deliver from the flames everyone who has in his life-time shed but a single tear for thee, everyone who has in any way helped thee, every one who has performed a pilgrimage to thy shrine, or mourned for thee, and everyone who had written tragic verses for thee. Bear each and all with thee to Paradise.(II 347)

Tombs and Relics

The passage immediately above refers to the veneration of the tomb of Husayn. This passage is but one of many which point to the importance of the tombs of the members of the family. Hasan desired to be buried beside the Prophet. In the height of crisis appeals are commonly made to the martyrs; and the Prophet, 'Alī, Fāṭimah, and the imāms assist the petitioners from their graves. There is an ardent desire to visit the tombs. (II 97-98, 277) Oaths are taken in the name of the dust of a grave. (II 89) In captivity the remnant of Husayn's party pleads for the privilege to return to the shrine of the Prophet. References are made of performing ceremonies at the shrines.(II 265)

Some long to be door-keepers at the sacred monuments and to shed tears there. (II 29) Husayn refers to the fact that no lamp burns on his tomb. (II 113)

The one particularly pertinent passage on this subject comes in answer to Husayn's concern as to whether God is pleased with him or not. "Is my martyrdom accepted in his court or not?" Gabriel answers in these words:

> May I be a sacrifice for thy throat that was unjustly cut! God, the glorious Lord, has sent thee a message, saying, "O oppressed Husain, I am thy shield and buckler, I am a witness that thou has fulfilled thy promise and made good thy word. The sole Creator has granted thee four things in return. First, whoever prays under the dome of thy shrine, his prayer shall be heard. Second, all true Imāms of religion shall be of thy seed. Third, the earth of the land where thou art buried shall be a cure for all diseases. Fourth, whoever visits thy sepulchre shall live a double life." (II 292-293)

Certain articles associated with members of the Household are also venerated as this quotation shows:

> Take from me this casket full of gems, containing the two sacred teeth of the Prophet. Take also this little box, wherein is the blood-drenched turban of 'Ali, the cup-bearer of Al Kauzer [sic]. Take this flask from me with expression of sorrow, for it contains some pieces of Hasan's heart. Take also the dear shirt of Husain the martyr, and keep it with thee like thy dear life, for my mother must intercede on the Day of Judgment concerning the sins of mankind through the merit of these things. (II 281-282)

Some articles, such as these, seem to possess certain powers, some are regarded as memorials in this world, (I 218), others

are symbolic of the power and authority of those to whom they belonged. (I 80, 81)

Symbolism (Qur'ān, History, and Legend)

The language of symbolism is used extensively in the ta'ziyah. Persons, events, and experiences have a way of suggesting or standing for some person, event, or experience directly related to the primary interest of the ta'ziyah. The appellations associated with the family of the Prophet often illustrate this use of symbolic language. A great many of these symbols are taken from the Qur'ān, history, and legend. Others come from the drama itself. Something in the present often calls to mind something associated with the past. (I 103) Since the future is not unknown, the past and the present are previews of the future. (I 102, 104, 108, 160, 163)

The best example is the use that is made of the Qur'ānic story about Jacob's grief over the loss of his beloved son, Joseph. As we have seen, Pelly's edition begins with this story, and it is used again and again in the drama. No doubt some parallel is seen between this story and the experiences of the holy family. As Jacob did, so many of them experience the loss of a loved one. "What has become of my Joseph?" "Which Joseph's garment is this?" (I 293, II 15, 73, 105, 129, 132, 190, 194, 341)

The Qur'ān, in particular, provides such symbols, but history and legend are used as well. For example, Husayn is a Joseph, a Solomon, a Moses, a Plato, or an Alexander. The legendary Nimrod is a popular symbol for the wicked oppressors of Husayn and his followers. (I 177, II 22) "Under every line" of the Qur'ān "is a volume of mysteries." (I 76) The surah named Yā Sīn is understood to laud the fourth imām who was one son of Husayn who was not martyred at Karbalā'. Muhammad is crowned with the "diadem of T. H.", a reference to the Arabic letters at the beginning of the Sūrah entitled Tā Hā. (I 85) On another occasion the family of Muhammad is called the "family of T.H." (II 190)

The few direct quotations from the Qur'ān suggest such ideas as sacrifice, rest, Paradise, and a return to God--all of which have significance in the message of the ta'ziyah. (I 121, 151, II 24) Husayn quotes the well-known light verse; (II 237) the imāms are called the similitudes of God in the drama.

Symbolic use is also made of legendary and historical persons related to ancient Persia. The names of famous warriors are symbolically applied to the historical characters of the drama..

So central and so important is the significance of Karbalā' and Husayn, the chief of martyrs, that it is as though everything has a subtle way of symbolizing some aspect of Karbalā'. Unless this practice is recognized, some of the material may

well seem irrelevant and mislead one's interpretation of the ta'ziyah.[12]

The Martyrdom of Husayn

A historical event, Karbalā', and a historical person, Husayn, are the focal point of attention in the ta'ziyah. Some further discussion of this factor is necessary, and we can now proceed against the background of the summation of the dominant themes in the ta'ziyah.

In chapter one some consideration was given to Karbalā' in historical perspective. Some political implications were behind Husayn's decision to go to Kūfah. It is interesting to note the way in which this affair is handled in the ta'ziyah. Political motivation has practically been eliminated. One might make the statement stronger were it not for the fact that there are a few scattered statements about Yazīd being unfit to rule as a khalīfah. (II 15, 32, 33) Karbalā' is understood as an event of cosmic proportions where the crisis is conceived in terms of religion rather than as a struggle for political leadership. Husayn did not go to Kūfah because he coveted a throne. (I 209, II 42) Yazīd was determined to make life bitter for Husayn wherever he might live. (I 208-209) Husayn was the imām, and the active opposition from Yazīd put Husayn in a difficult position. As

the imām, he had the responsibility of serving as the guide and director of religious affairs. This he was determined to do; imāms are obedient and faithful in their responsibilities. Yazīd was interfering with Husayn's God-given function.

The Kūfans had issued an invitation for Husayn to carry out this function in their midst. As an imām, Husayn had foreknowledge of their duplicity. Nevertheless, he acted on Muslim's assurance of the sincerity of the Kūfans, but a show-down with Yazīd was really inevitable and Husayn's martyrdom was expected. It had a place in the plan of God, and to the Prophets and to the "Seal of the Prophets" and the four illustrious members of his family, the end had been fully known. God did not desire the murder of Husayn; yet God is the Cause of all that happens. If it were otherwise it would suggest a limitation on His sovereignty. Trial and tribulation had always been the lot of God's functionaries in this world.

On the other hand, these agents of God always obediently and voluntarily faced the inevitable. Husayn was no exception. With courage tempered with patience, Husayn challenged the vicious forces of evil in sacrificial devotion to God's will. Not for personal glory but in the cause of true religion and for the Prophet's people, Husayn found purpose and meaning in martyrdom.

In the view of the ta'ziyah, no more horrible experience was ever endured or witnessed by anyone. Jacob may challenge

this verdict with a story of his own trials, but his plea actually only served to underscore Husayn's ordeal by contrast.

God never fails to reward the faithful. Those who die in zealous perserverence for His cause gain Paradise. This is one aspect of the reward which Husayn receives. So do others who die as martyrs for the sake of Husayn, for identification with the cause of the imām is identification with the cause of God.

There was one concern above all others that had continually worried the Prophet. This had to do with the destiny of his people as they had faced the trials of Judgment. If he could only be assured of the salvation of his people. Before he died he was assured by Gabriel that his desire would not go unheeded by God. The concern of the Prophet became a burning concern of his household, and each in his turn went to his martyrdom in the hope that he might be able to contribute to the salvation of the Prophet's people on the Day of Judgment. They seek to do this through the act of intercession, and in the ta'ziyah this function belongs to all of them. But in his supreme trial at Karbalā', Husayn not only gave up his own life, but he even sacrificed his own beloved children. Neither the Prophets nor the imāms could match his sufferings and trials. He is the "chief of martyrs." His recompense is the position as chief intercessor at the Judgment by the authority and decision of

God by way of Gabriel and the Prophet. At the judgment he exercises his prerogative as intercessor, and it redounds to the benefit and joy of the Prophet's people. This is the central message which the ta'ziyah proclaims.

CHAPTER THREE

THE TA'ZIYAH - A POPULAR EXPRESSION OF SHI'I THOUGHT

The Question of Origins

Racial and Political Motivation

An Expression of Shī'ī Thought

The Concepts of Martyr and Intercession

- Martyr (Shahīd)
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An Expression Popular in Nature

Husayn, the "Chief of Martyrs"

CHAPTER THREE

THE TA'ZIYAH--A POPULAR EXPRESSION OF SHI'I THOUGHT

In the introduction to this study we expressed the opinion that it is rather difficult to reconcile the various opinions and views that have been presented on the subject of the ta'ziyah. In the attempt to do this new questions arose for which there seemed to be no certain or adequate answers. The examination of the text of a ta'ziyah appeared to be a helpful approach, since we were unable to find any serious attempt to understand the phenomenon through a text. Before proceeding with the examination of the content of a text, it was deemed important to prepare the way by exploring such matters as the historical development of the phenomenon itself and the history of the way in which it came to the attention of the West as well as how the West interpreted its significance. Some attention has now been given to the content of a specific texual version of the ta'ziyah. We can now look back, so to speak, and see whether the results of our findings have anything to say to the problems and questions which were posed in the beginning.

The Question of Origins

No attempt was made to determine when it was first suggested that the Muharram festivities had some possible connections

with the ancient Adonis-Tammuz festival. We did see at the outset of this study that what the travelling reporter saw in 1819 reminded him of that ancient festival.[1]

The theory was pursued seriously by B. D. Eerdmans in a publication of 1894.[2] In the meantime it does not appear that the theory had really been accepted or rejected. It continues to hold some attraction, and it is frequently entertained in recent material.[3]

The point of similarity between the ancient festival and Muharram has usually been seen in connection with Muharram processional rites--the reenactment of a funeral procession to be specific.[4] This possible point of connection does not come under investigation in this paper, but the problem is not entirely outside the consideration of this study, since the ta'ziyah is sometimes regarded as reflecting ideas from the ancient festival.[5]

Eliade finds that this "very ancient myth of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Tammuz has replicas and imitations almost throught the Paleo-Oriental world, and traces of its scenario were preserved even down to post-Christian gnosticism."[6] He calls attention to two themes in particular--"the consoling power of Tammuz' sufferings for each individual," and "that every defeat is annulled and transcended by the final victory."[7] It is not difficult to find both of these themes in the ta'ziyah.

At the same time, such motifs as resurrection, agricultural regeneration, and sexual reproduction are not in the ta'ziyah. There are real difficulties in finding any satisfactory correspondence between the purposes which each festival seeks to serve.[8] Historical connection or any direct influence of the ancient festival on the ta'ziyah has not been satisfactorily established, although the wide-spread evidence of replicas and imitations of the ancient festival makes it a possibility.

In the course of the discussion of this chapter it will be suggested that the thought content of the ta'ziyah shows significant relation with hadīth literature and with recognized creedal statementsin Shī'ī Islām. Since this relationship seems so clear and obvious, the theory of the influence of the ancient festival on the ta'ziyah would appear to also involve the consideration of its influence on indigenous developments in early Islām. It cannot be confined simply to the two festivals. The relationship between the ancient festival and the theological developments in early Islām cannot be explored here. Since we do not find sufficient acknowledgment of the ta'ziyah as an Islamic development, we are inclined to emphasize this relationship as a factor to be considered in any attempt to explore the question of origin. The thought and function of the ta'ziyah has undergone considerable modification if the ancient festival ever exerted any influence.

Racial and Political Motivation

In the introduction reference was also made to the theory that the ta'ziyah reflects racial, patriotic, and nationalistic motivation. Again, remarks about this theory will have to be restricted to any internal evidence that our version of the ta'ziyah may have provided.

Strothmann makes the comment that national hatred of Arabs is seen in those scenes where Shahrabānū returns to her home in Persia and where Fāṭimah is rescued by a Persian king.[9] Strothmann is undoubtedly referring to such remarks as these:

> ...I fear lest the Arabs should lead my sister captive another time; ... (II 168)
>
> ...I would resign my sovereignty and no longer reign rather than that a camel-driving Arab should make my sister a prisoner. (II 169)
>
> Thy head is filled with the pride of youth, forgetting how, a little while ago, thy kingdom of Persia was sacked by the Arabs, who carried off the crown and ring of Persia, leading the women into captivity, and pulling down the diadem from the crown of the head of your Jamshīd. (II 184)
>
> The time when the Arabs can reproach the Persians has gone away. (II 184)

In isolation these statements suggest an attitude of racial hatred toward the Arabs. But such remarks are primarily restricted to these two scenes; they are not characteristic of the ta'ziyah as a whole. These remarks of hatred lose much of

their force due to the fact that in other instances the ta'ziyah does not show any intent of pushing this particular attitude. Only a few pages later we find a band of Arabs, all Shī'ahs and friends of 'Alī, pursuing Yazīd's army hoping to rescue the prisoners belonging to the family of Muhammad. (II 190) Earlier on the plain of Karbalā' a band of Arab chiefs had offered to sacrifice an animal for each of the seventy-two members of Husayn's party. (I 244-245) In the ta'ziyah, resentment is most pronounced against those who failed to support Husayn, openly opposed him, or failed to recognize the significance of what happened at Karbalā'. Naturally, the Kūfans are among these, as this question shows:

> Tell me, are ye of the genuine Arabs of the interior parts, or are ye of the province of 'Irāq only?

The question also seems to suggest that there is no blanket hatred of Arabs. There is certainly no attempt to play down the Arab connections of the revered family. The household of the Prophet is frequently referred to as the Hāshimites,[10] and Abū Sufyān is a symbol for the Ummawīs.[11]

In the context of the remarks of Arab hatred quoted above, the major concern continues to be for the Prophet's family and his people. Shahrabānū is portrayed as having given more thought to the Prophet's people than to her own sick, feeble son who later became the fourth imām. This in itself is interesting

for there is no effort to exploit or even to emphasize the fourth imām's blood ties with both Persian royalty and the Prophet. The fact is that the imām's importance suffers by comparison with the other children of Husayn. One might expect just the reverse, if the ta'ziyah were nationalistically and patriotically motivated.

There is an occasional glimpse of color consciousness. "...Thou art black-faced, that is true, but thou hast, I opine, a pure white heart, and art much esteemed by us..." (I 87) "...Oh how happy if, in spite of the blackness, I could be raised to life on the Resurrection Day with a white, shining face!"(II 257-258)

An occasional reference here and there to Jews and Christians might also be mentioned. In scene XXXII a daughter of Husayn addresses her oppressors:

> O shameless and imprudent maidens of Damascus, why are you pelting stones at our children? We are neither infidels, nor Jews, nor idolaters, to be reproached by you for our faith; we are the sacred household of your own Prophet. You must not pelt the descendants of his daughter with stones. (II 246)

In the Seven Hells, the first is for Muslims, the second is for Christians, and the seventh is for Jews. (I 34-36)[12] Christians are infidels and idolaters.(II 237, 324) But these remarks, like the remarks of hatred for Arabs, are of minor significance in the ta'ziyah. The real criterion for judgments of hatred

is the attitude which others hold toward the Prophet and his family.

An interesting bit of conversation takes place between King Caniah and his minister in scene XXXVI. It may intend to portray an outsider's view; nevertheless, it could be very suggestive to a Muharram audience. We have already seen the outcome of the King's policy toward the Muslims who were commemorating the martyrdom of Husayn. This passage suggests that any positive or negative use of religion for purely political ends is a touchy matter.

> Kings and princes must never interfere with anyone's religion or creed, O monarch! On the contrary, every one should be allowed to follow his own persuasion just as he likes. Thou art not commanded to be a guardian of other men's faith, but solely of thine own. Do not unnecessarily disperse abroad the people, while living peaceably under thy imperial government, by interfering with their religion. (II 312)

In the first chapter it was pointed out that a recognition of the significance of Karbalā' came early, and was not dependent upon any political move to mark its commemoration. If political leaders sometimes capitalized on its importance for their people, we should not fail to observe that Muharram festivities (the context out of which the ta'ziyah developed) did not always meet with the approval of the political leaders. The history of Muharram festivities and the more recent history of the ta'ziyah suggest that the commemoration has actually often worked against the aspirations of political leaders.

An Expression of Shī'ī Thought

Several times we have attributed the ta'ziyah to the Twelver Shi'ah. The truth of this is affirmed by the drama in its reference to 'Alī as the parent of the seven and four.[13] At this point we turn to one of the most important observations that we can make about the text of the ta'ziyah which has been examined. We want to underscore the point that there is a significant core of Shī'ī doctrine behind the drama. That the ta'ziyah is a Shī'ī creation is generally acknowledged, but the impression has sometimes been given that the phenomenon is exotic, so fanatical in some of its ideas, and so excessive in some of its practices, that it could not contain any respectable ideas even from the perspective of Shī'ī Islām. It is therefore, of some importance to give attention to these basic and recognized doctrines. As a general rule the ta'ziyah does not lead us into an intricate involvement with these doctrines; it is not meant to serve in the capacity of a creedal statement. In many cases we must be satisfied with simple and unelaborated declarations of position and attitude.

The presence of recognized Shī'ī doctrine can be substantiated by making a comparison between some of the dominant themes of the ta'ziyah and the Shī'ī position in recognized creedal statements.[14]

The elevated position of the Household of the Prophet is not at all contrary to the general position presented in the creeds.

> It is necessary to believe that Allah the Mighty and Glorious did not create any created thing more excellent than Muhammad and the Imāms, peace on them, that they are the most beloved of creatures in the eyes of Allah, and the most noble and the foremost among them, on account of their acceptance of Him (as their Lord). 15

On several occasions these very ideas were expressed in the ta'ziyah.[16]

> We believe that Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He above all, created the whole of creation for him (the Prophet) and for the People of his House, and that but for them, Allah, Glory be to Him, would not have created the heavens or the earth, Paradise or Hell, Adam or Eve, the angels or (any) created thing (shay') -- the Blessings of Allah upon them all. 17

As for the relation between the Prophet and the people of his house, we noted a delegated line of authority. A creed expresses the position in a similar manner.

> It was through these [former Prophets] that the true knowledge passed to them (i. e. Muhammad, 'Alī, etc.). Similarly the true knowledge was transmitted after Muhammad, by 'Alī, Hasan and Husayn to those amongst the Imāms who came after Husayn. 18

In the ta'ziyah, even though Husayn is the central figure, Muhammad's position is upheld and his will is to be fulfilled. Each of the imāms regards himself as a slave of God and His Prophet. In the appointment of Muhammad's successor, the legitimacy of it all is kept on a high level.[19]

The view of the imāms is in accord with recognized Shī'ī thought.[20] They are in authority and are to be obeyed. They are the repositories of God's knowledge and the interpreters of His revelation. For the people they serve as guides and witnesses. The imāms possess the attributes of infallibility and perfection. They are obedient to God. "They are for the protection of the people of this earth just as the stars are for the inhabitants of the heavens." This statement suggests a reason why the members of the Household are referred to as celestial bodies in the ta'ziyah. The world cannot get along without their guidance. To obey them is to obey God; to disobey them is to be disobedient to Him.

In the creedal statements we find the angels carry out the very roles which they assume in the ta'ziyah.[21] They cooperate obediently with God, the Prophets, and the imāms, all of which are more excellent than the angels. The subservient role of the angels is especially seen in the ta'ziyah where the angel of death cannot take Muhammad without his consent.

We have previously presented an early statement related to the doctrine of predestination and the murder of Husayn.[22] We suggested that, like the creed, the ta'ziyah affirms that God is sovereign; yet men, including the imāms, are responsible. Both the ta'ziyah and the creeds seek a middle way between

predestination and free will.[23] The creed of Ibn Bābawayhi indicates that the understanding and significance of the murder of Husayn was brought into the discussion of the controversial doctrine of predestination at a rather early date. This information is important to us as further evidence of the early historical significance of Karbalā'.

The concept of intercession, so prominent in the message of the ta'ziyah, has a definite place in the creeds also.

> Second, the intercession (shafā'a) of our Prophet, the Messenger of Allāh (on him be peace!). And his intercession is expected, rather it has occurred, according to the word of the Most High, "Ask pardon for thy sin, and for believers both men and women" (47:21). ...And since Allāh commanded the Prophet to seek pardon he did not disobey, for he is immune to sin, and his seeking pardon was accepted for his people, that he might be satisfied, according to the word of the most High, "And in the end shall thy Lord be bounteous to thee and thou shalt be satisfied" (93:5). This is according to his (Muhammad's) word, "I have stored up my intercession for those among my people who have committed great sins."
> And know that our belief (madhhab) is that the Imāms can intercede for sinners among their Shī'ites just as the Messenger of Allāh can, without any difference. For they have informed us of that, and their immunity to sin prevents them from lying. 24

While the Resurrection scene might give the impression that Husayn is the sole intercessor, the ta'ziyah also presents the fact that the prerogative does not belong to Husayn alone.

It was pointed out that the ta'ziyah begins with a prediction that trials of all kinds will be the lot of the family of the Prophet. That the imāms were wronged receives considerable

attention in the creed of Ibn Bābawayhi.[25] 'Alī is reported to have said that "ever since I was Born I have always been wronged." The tragic deaths of the imāms came as no surprise.

> And verily the Prophet and Imāms, on whom be peace, had informed the people that they would all be murdered.[26]

While it may seem strange to some that the enemy in the ta'ziyah refer to themselves in the most base terms, the creeds actually leave no room for any other characterization.[27]

The following passage reminds one of the ta'ziyah--the pessimistic view of the world, patience in the face of death, and a preference for death.

> When Imām Husayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Tālib was hard pressed, those who were with him looked at him, and behold! he was totally different from them. Because when in great difficulty their colour changed and they trembled with fear, and their hearts were filled with trepidation, and their sides began to throb, Imām Husayn and some of his particular companions had bright faces, restful limbs and complete peace of mind. Then some of them said to others: Look at him, he does not care for death. Then Husayn said to them: Patience, O scions of nobility! For what is death, but a bridge by which you cross over from misfortune and harm to spacious gardens and eternal favour? Now which of you would dislike to proceed from a prison to a palace? And as for these, your enemies, they are like people who go from a palace to a prison and to a painful torment. Verily, concerning this my father ('Alī) related to me from my grandfather, the Messenger of Allah: Forsooth, the world is a prison for the believer and a paradise for the unbeliever; and death is the bridge for the former to their gardens, and for the latter, to their hell-fire. And he did not lie; nor do I. 28

In the message of the ta'ziyah the pursuit of truth and justice is a foremost concern. Worldly possessions and

rule over a worldly kingdom are not the motivating interests of the family. Ascetic tendencies and dedication to high ethical standards characterize the family in both the creeds and the ta'ziyah. In the drama 'Alī's life was especially marked by poverty. One of the creeds includes this description of 'Alī.

> He is the most ascetic of men after the Prophet of Allāh. Hence it comes about that he is the Imām, for the most ascetic is the best. And as for his being the most ascetic, we must examine his words (kalām) regarding asceticism (Zuhd), and his sermons and commands and prohibitions, and his shunning of the world, the evidences of which are manifest in him (not in word but in deed), so that he divorced the world three times. [The world came to him in the form of a beautiful maiden, and he pronounced the triple formula of divorce, thereby making her unlawful for him.]
>
> And he shunned worldly pleasures of food and drink and raiment, and he was not known by anyone to be entangled in anything worldly. He even used to lock up his vessel of bread, and when they asked him about that, he said, "I fear lest one of my children should put in it some buttered bread." And the fact that he distributed his own food and his family's food to the poor and the orphans and the prisoners is a sufficient proof of his asceticism. And a verse of the Koran descended regarding that, proving his excellence and his immunity to sin. 29

On the plain of Karbalā' Husayn was extremely generous when he shared with the enemy the little water his group possessed.

This has not been an exhaustive comparison of the thought of the ta'ziyah with the thought of recognized creedal statements. But it would seem to illustrate the important point that our version of the ta'ziyah would serve as an effective

expression of Shī'ī thought. It has been acknowledged that all performances of the ta'ziyah probably did not reflect this high level of thought; nevertheless, one may well assume that the ta'ziyah was an important medium of instruction and a significant affirmation of faith, embracing the major portion of the population, especially when its popularity was at its peak.

The Concepts of Martyr and Intercession

There are two key concepts in the message of the ta'ziyah that deserve a fuller discussion. They are the concepts of martyrdom (shahīd) and intercession (shafā'ah). These concepts are pivotal ideas in the message. Husayn is the "chief of martyrs" and the extreme trials which he experienced merit for him Paradise and the office of chief intercessor on the Day of Judgment. We have already seen that the ta'ziyah makes use of a considerable amount of recognized Shī'ī doctrine. In the discussion of the concepts of martyr and intercession, we shall pursue another line of approach which also seems to relate the thought of the ta'ziyah to indigenous developments in Islam. To this matter we shall presently turn, and if we can demonstrate this relationship, we shall have a much clearer and fairer perspective from which to make judgments about the ta'ziyah.

Martyr (shahīd)

1) The association of the idea of martyr with shahīd

comes as a gradual development in Islām. In the Qur'ān shahīd has the primary meaning of witness.[30] God, angels, prophets, and the faithful are witnesses of men's deeds. For example:

> But God bears witness to that He has sent down to thee; He has sent it down with his knowledge; and the angels also bear witness; and God suffices for a witness. 31

> Thus We appointed you a midmost nation that you might be witnesses to the people, and that the Messenger might be a witness to you; ...,32

2. The essence of the idea of martyr, however, is found in the Qur'ān even though no technical term for the idea is in use. Those who persevere in the pursuit of God's way shall have their reward. The relation between sacrificial devotion to God's way and Paradise is very close. For example:

> Those who believe, and have emigrated, and have struggled in the way of God with their possessions and their selves are mightier in rank with God; and those--they are the triumphant; their Lord gives them good tidings of mercy from Him and good pleasure; for them await gardens wherein is lasting bliss, therein to dwell forever and ever; surely with God is a mighty wage. 33

> O believers, shall I direct you to a commerce that shall deliver you from a painful chastisement? You shall believe in God and His Messenger, and struggle in the way of God with your possessions and your selves. That is better for you, did you but know. He will forgive you your sins and admit you into gardens underneath which rivers flow, and to dwelling-places goodly in Gardens of Eden; that is the mighty triumph; and other things you love, help from God and a nigh victory. Give thou good tidings to the believers! 34

Commentaries on the Qur'ān have interpreted passages like the above as containing the idea of martyrdom.[35]

3. In Hadīth literature shahīd takes on the technical meaning of martyr. The person who meets death on the battlefield in defence of the faith or in its advancement is acknowledged to be the recipient of special rewards in Paradise. We have seen that members of the Prophet's family, Husayn in particular, and devoted followers have made this kind of sacrifice according to the ta'ziyah. The ta'ziyah approximates so closely the "picture" of the martyr in Hadīth literature that we want to proceed by correlating this concept in the ta'ziyah with the salient features of martyrdom in the Hadīth literature.[36]

4. We noted in the Qur'ānic passage from Sūrah 9 above that there is a direct connection between zealous, sacrificial perseverence and the realm of Paradise. Hadīth literature develops this idea further. The martyrs are released from the circumstances that normally face a person upon death. Martyrs are not subject to the usual interrogation of the grave. They also by-pass Barzakh, the immediate state of the soul between death and resurrection.[37] The ta'ziyah makes no reference to these matters in connection with death of members of the holy family; the silence suggests that the martyrs are not subject to these trials and delays. The holy family speaks of immediate reunion with the deceased members upon death.[38] Martyrdom opens a direct door to Paradise in the ta'ziyah and in Hādith literature.

5. The martyrs are also freed from the trials of Judgment Day by virtue of their sacrificial death. Any sins they may have committed are forgiven. A man once asked the Prophet:

> O Apostle of God, if I am killed in Allāh's way, will then my sins be forgiven? Mohammed answers: Aye, if you are killed in Allāh's way, full of perseverance and resignation, proceeding forward without return. Then Mohammed, reflecting says: What was the question you asked? The man repeats his question and Mohammed repeats his answer, adding this time: Excepted pecuniary debts; so it was communicated to me by Gabriel. 39

Since the family of the Prophet is immune from sin they would not stand in need of this forgiveness. In the case of others who died for the cause of the imāms, Paradise appears to have been their certain and immediate destiny. It is interesting to note that many established ideas and attitudes in Shī'ī Islām correlate very closely with the concept of martyr in Hadīth literature. The concept of the imāmate actually insures all the benefits associated with martyrdom.

6. In Fiqh literature there is considerable discussion under salāt about the proper procedure for caring for the body of the martyr at the time of death.[40] Some maintain that since the martyr has been forgiven of his sin, he is pure and it is not essential that the body be washed before burial; he is rather to be buried in the bloody garment in which he dies.[41]

> In the works on law and tradition it is expressly said that martyrs may not be washed; they have to be buried in their bloody clothes in which they will appear on the day of resurrection. 42

In this connection, Fāṭimah's statement just prior to her death is interesting and relevant.

> Husain's body shall receive no washing, no lotus leaves' powder, and no camphor when he dies. (I 131)

7. In Ḥadīth literature the martyrs enjoy the highest rank in Paradise.[43] A tradition relates a dream whereby Muḥammad was brought to Paradise to view its beautiful abodes. One was superior to all the rest. When Muḥammad asked concerning who inhabited it, he was told that it was the abode of the martyrs.[44] The ta'ziyah does not enter into any elaboration about degrees and ranks in Paradise, but it certainly implies nothing less than the highest and best for the martyred family. It is most emphatic about this when it speaks of Ḥusayn. Were it not for other statements the following passage might convey an extreme position.

> No mortal has ever attained to such a height of perfect glory with the Most High as Husain. All the prophets unanimously agree that, of those born of woman, there has arisen none, up to this time, greater than the thirsty-lipped Husain. (II 324-25)

As for the martyrs who did not belong to the family of the Prophet, the esteem in which they are held in the ta'ziyah gives some indication of their high position in Paradise. The idea of ranks in Paradise is an established aspect of the Shī'ī creed.[45]

8. The martyrs are described in Ḥadīth literature as being near to the throne of God.[46] Again the ta'ziyah implies

such a view even if it does not make it explicit. Unlike a deliberately constructed creed, the ta'ziyah conveys ideas in a more casual manner. When we recall the stature that the family is described to have in this world, we already have some idea about their probable proximity to God. In rank and nearness to God, the immediate members of the Prophet's family are second to none, and martyrdom contributes to this status. (II 343)

9. Martyrdom became highly attractive because of the rewards of Paradise and because of the esteem in which martyrs were held by the community. Traditions relate the desire to die on the field of battle for these reasons. Muhammad is said to have desired that he might die again and again.

> To Mohammed is ascribed the saying that, if he had followed his personal inclination, he would not have been absent from a single razzia, wishing to be killed in the first and to return to life in order to be killed in the next one, and so on, till he should have been present at all of them. 47

> Concerning the inhabitants of paradise it is said that none of them desires to return to the earth, except the martyrs who would like to be killed a second time. 48

The desire to die the death of a martyr, is of course, a very pronounced desire in the ta'ziyah as we have seen in the last chapter. The same holds true concerning the martyr's wishes to suffer again and again. The typical statement appears in words like: "... I would offer my soul, not once or twice, but

a thousand times, for the salvation of thy people." (II 101, 303)

10. The popular desire for martyrdom presented problems. It could easily get out of hand as men sought it for their own glory. The Khārījī sect[49] gained the reputation of seeking martyrdom.[50] Goldziher attributes traditions which reacted unfavorably to martyrdom to the abusive practice of this sect.[51] Wensinck proposes an additional reason--the unacceptability of an act of suicide in Islām.[52] In any case, intention (nīya) became an important factor in making judgments about a particular death.

> Whosoever partakes of the battle from desire of glory or in order to show his courage is no martyr; a martyr is only he who fights in order that Allah's word may be prevalent. 53

In the case of the ta'ziyah, an accusation of suicide carries little weight when the doctrine of the Imāmate is respected. The ta'ziyah is emphatic in declaring that the family of the Prophet meets death not for personal glory but rather for the sake of God's cause and the Prophet's people. (I 86, 87) The concept of predestination is very important in this connection. It rules out any self-seeking motive. The martyrdom of the holy family is the will of God; they know about it, and yet they voluntarily and happily accept their destiny for other than personal gain.

The test of intention introduces the idea not so much

of the battle against the enemy of the battlefield as the war against one's own self. Should we pursue that idea fully we would be led far afield of the immediate purpose of this study. It introduces the important subject of mysticism in Islam. We actually touched on that movement above when allusions were made to ascetic tendencies within the holy family. The early trends of the Sūfī movement in particular emphasized a turning away from worldly interests and selfish desires. The movement stressed the ascetic character of the Prophet and the members of his family. In the scene of the martyrdom of Husayn (II 96-98) a "darwīsh" was presumably put to death as a martyr for devotion to Husayn. Just before the order for his death was given he says:

> May I be offered a sacrifice for thy blessed arrival! Pardon me my fault, and give me permission to fight the battle for faith, for I am weary of Life. It is better for me to be killed, and delivered at once from so many vexations of spirit. Martyrdom is, in fact, one of the glories of my faith. (II 98)

There are two points in particular that should be underscored here. In Hadīth literature the martyr and the ascetic were often recognized as synonymous.[54] The ta'ziyah seems to support this relationship. The second point is that the importance of intention and the shift from the battlefield to a battle with one's own self expands the number who qualify for the designation of martyr. This expansion of the qualification for martyr will

be discussed again later. Here we hasten to say that we must not imply that the ta'ziyah suggests that the members of the family experienced any struggle with personal and selfish desires. At the same time such a struggle may have been a part of the experience of the converts who sealed their conversion with their own blood.

Intercession (shafā'ah)

The Qur'ān does not present a clear-cut position on the idea of intercession. Some passages represent an unfavorable attitude while others do not absolutely exclude it.[55] In Hadīth literature intercession is an accepted fact.[56] In this literature intercession is the prerogative of God, the Prophets, Apostles, martyrs, and saints.[57] Attention has already been called to its favorable place in the creedal statements of Shī'ī Islām. Its inclusion in Sunnī creeds as well, indicates that the concept of intercession became an important concept in Islām as a whole.[58]

The fact that martyrs have the privilege of intercession actually makes the idea of intercession an integral factor in the doctrine of the martyr which was under discussion above.

The relationship between martyrdom and the act of intercession appears to be a very essential point for the understanding of the ta'ziyah. The Day of Judgment is inevitable,

and the sins of the Prophet's people confront the Prophet and his family with real concern over the destiny of the people. The Prophet, first of all, carries it as a real burden on his heart. (I 36, 42) Not even death eliminates the burden. The motif of intercession appears to offer some hope of salvation for the people on the Day of Judgment. Suffering to the extent of martyrdom offers some hope to the concerned family that God might grant them the right of interceding on behalf of the Prophet's people at the Judgment. Before Muhammad died, he was assured that God would show mercy on his people. (I 43,86) Muhammad, in turn, informed 'Alī that 'Alī would be murdered and called upon him to offer himself voluntarily.

> After my death, O Ali thou must voluntarily submit that the petals of thy rose be scattered abroad, that thy head be cloven asunder like the point of a pen. Peradventure thy martyrdom will be the means of salvation to my people, in raising thee to the high office of intercession for them. (I 87)

'Alī responded:

> O Prophet, I am ready to be afflicted with all sorts of ills in this life for the sake of thy holy people's salvation. (I 87)

Muhammad then entered into a similar covenant with Fāṭimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn. (I 86-89) Each one of them agreed to voluntarily suffer martyrdom for the sake of the sinful people. According to the ta'ziyah they kept their word, each in his or her turn. The recompense was the right of intercession for each one of them.

Consideration of Husayn's exalted position in this role will receive attention later.

The point we especially wish to underscore here, is the fact that martyrdom is understood as a prerequisite for the function of intercessor in the case of the members of the family. Their recompense was also Paradise, but it appears that intercession was reserved alone for the special members of the household of the Prophet.

It would be interesting to explore the interrelationship of the concepts of martyrdom and intercession in Hadīth literature and the doctrines of Shī'ī Islām. That will be impossible here. But we do suggest that in these two approaches to the ta'ziyah, we have a framework of thought by which we can understand the significance of the ta'ziyah and make fair and meaningful statements about it. If this is the case, we do not have to make vague generalizations about a doctrine of soteriology in the ta'ziyah which suggest some parallel with Christian doctrines of redemption and atonement. The ta'ziyah has connections with indigenous developments in the Islamic stream of thought. Islām provides categories of thought by which to understand and explain the message, making it imperative to respect both religious traditions in any discussion of the ta'ziyah.

An Expression Popular in Nature

The observation has been made that the ta'ziyah has vital connections with developments indigenous to Islām in general and with the developed thought of Shī'ī Islām in particular. That the ta'ziyah is a popular expression must not be overlooked. Actually, this is the more generally accepted opinion, and the previous discussion has been considered important as establishing the relation of the ta'ziyah with what might be considered more legitimate developments within Islām.

The ta'ziyah is a popular expression from several different perspectives. The Muharram festivities involved so many people either as sympathetic spectators or as more active participants. It was in the context of that occasion that the ta'ziyah developed into the climactic feature of the festivities. A ta'ziyah of the level of the one which we have examined provided an opportunity to bring a considerable amount of thought to the attention of many people in each annual performance.

A dramatic presentation of this kind is, by its very nature, a vehicle for conveying ideas in a non-systematic way. This is a factor that we have had to keep in mind as we sought to summarize its thought. It is not as precise, consistent, and does not elaborate on certain points to the extent that we might wish it did. But its dramatic character serves to provide a wider appeal for its message than it might otherwise have.

We also should not overlook more popular ideas in the content of the text which we have examined. Just how these ideas entered into the more recognized Shī'ī stream of thought, and where they came from, is not easily explained.

As the concept of martyr continued to develop, it became common to apply the term, shahīd, to anyone whose death, experience, or religious devotion aroused the sympathy of his fellowmen.[59] With this expansion of the concept, many qualified who could not under the definition we discussed above. The expanded concept is seen in this hadīth:

> Whosoever demands martyrdom from Allah in uprightness obtains the place of a martyr, even if he should die in his bed. 60

Members of the family of the Prophet who were not actually put to death, but endured sorrow and affliction would qualify as martyrs under this expanded definition. The ta'ziyah offers no definite qualification for martyrdom, but it tends to revere all who were involved sympathetically in the Karbalā' event.

In the expanded definition the concept of the martyr merges with the concept of the walī (saint). The wide-spread penetration of the mystical movement is well-known. The important point we want to acknowledge here is that there are ideas and practices present in the ta'ziyah which are commonly associated with the mystical movement and with those of the Shī'ī community.

The veneration of tombs and sacred articles is an obvious feature of the ta'ziyah.

The word, walī, suggests the idea of friend, companion, protector, and benefactor.[61] It has meaning within the wide-spread mystical movement as well as within the doctrines of Shī'ī thought. It immediately brings to mind the relationship which existed between the members of the Prophet's family. It also expresses the role of the family and the imāms in their relation with the Prophet's people. Especially on a popular level, the expanded concept of martyr, aspects of the mystical movement, and aspects of Shī'ī thought, tend to merge and a very difficult, if not impossible, situation arises in any attempt to separate them in such a phenomenon as the ta'ziyah.

It seems fair to suggest that all three developments unite to make it possible to give the ta'ziyah appeal and importance from several different lines of approach. But it may well be that what makes for popularity also contributes to conflict and tension over a phenomenon which becomes the possession of everyone. Hence, one can understand the enthusiastic endorsement that has made the ta'ziyah popular as well as the tension and violence that has contributed to its curtailment.

Our version of the ta'ziyah is probably one of the more respectable versions from a Shī'ī point of view. One would

expect that this would be generally true of those versions which would find their way into a written record under "responsible" direction. In consideration of what we have come to know about this version of the ta'ziyah, it is suggested that we have been examining a popular expression of thought -- yet one which conveys a considerable amount of recognized Shī'ī doctrine.

Husayn, the "Chief of Martyrs"

In a consideration of the ta'ziyah, the question naturally arises as to why Husayn is the shahīd par excellence. The ta'ziyah definitely affirms this title, and if we put this question to the drama, it simply answers that of all ordeals of suffering undergone by man, none equals Husayn's.

We have seen that this attitude and assessment did not originate with the ta'ziyah. It goes back to the event of Karbalā' itself.[62]

The interpretation and the significance attached to the event from the very beginning is understandable. The reconstruction of the historical situation suggests that Husayn's move had political implications. From the political perspective it was a complete defeat. The Penitents' march which was motivated by the event also ended in defeat. That was only the beginning of a number of such defeats which may well have heightened feelings

about Karbalā'.[63] In retrospect the event was understood and remembered in essentially religious terms.

There were circumstances about the event that encouraged such an interpretation. The party of Husayn numbered seventy-two according to tradition. An attack by the army of Yazīd on such a small band was an open display of cruel inhumanity and injustice. Husayn's threat to Yazīd was minor compared to other threats facing Damascus at the time.[64] The situation at Karbalā' was more clear-cut than the complexity surrounding the opposition to 'Alī and more appealing than the circumstances surrounding the compromise of Hasan with Damascus. The vindication of Husayn's honor and claim finally comes as a result of God's declaration in the eschatological event of Judgment.

The Twelver Shī'ah celebrate the line of Husayn. The frequency with which Muhammad, Fāṭimah, 'Alī, Hasan, and Husayn are considered as a special family unit in Twelver literature also suggests the importance that was attached to the line of Fāṭimah. It leaves the impression of a break between this group and the rest of the imāms. The ta'ziyah tends to illustrate this break also. The fourth imām was not a son of Fāṭimah, nor was he an immediate member of the Prophet's family, growing up under the tutelage of the Prophet and 'Alī. He does not receive the attention that is accorded to the previous five members.

This is not meant to imply that he was any less an imām. But in the light of the special status apparently attributed to the five, the murder of the sole surviving immediate member of the Prophet's family may have been considered especially tragic. The fourth imām never achieved any political significance, and looking back Husayn's death snuffed out any hope for political leadership under an immediate descendant of the Prophet.

We have alluded to the fact that the ill-treatment of the imāms is a prominent feature in Shī'ī literature. The fact of suffering is an integral aspect of the Shī'ī emphasis on the justice of God. For suffering there must be recompense from God; otherwise, He is unjust.

> ... (1) First, recompense for the suffering, otherwise He would be unjust, and Allāh is exalted above that. And it is necessary that the recompense be in excess of the pain to the extent that every rational being be satisfied. For it is evil in our opinion (fī'sh-shāhid) to cause anyone to suffer in order to recompense him for the suffering without (giving him) something in excess, because that would be in vain. (2) Second, there must be (in the suffering some) kindness (lutf), either for the sufferer or for another, that it may not be in vain. But as for that suffering which proceeds from us in which there is some sort of evil--it is incumbent upon Allāh to avenge the sufferer of his tormentor, because of His justice ('adl), and because the Koran teaches it. And in this case the recompense must be equal to the suffering. And if it were not thus He would be unjust. 65

If Husayn's sufferings are understood to be without equal, the justice of God dictates that there must be a recompense to compensate

for Husayn's courage, patience, and endurance. The ta'ziyah emphasizes the family desire for the right of intercession. It is only natural that the "king of martyrs" would receive as recompense, the prerogative of chief intercessor on the Day of Judgment, because he is the chief sufferer in history.

We also mention one final point. Husayn's martyrdom is not presented as unique nor is he the sole person capable of offering intercession. In both cases he is only one among several who share the same destiny and the same recompense. Where there is a doctrine of co-equality, as there is in the doctrine of the imāmate, there seems to be a tendency to exalt the particular imām under consideration without intending to degrade other imāms. The ta'ziyah is Husayn's turn for attention by the Shī'ī community. Husayn's status in the ta'ziyah is only a matter of degree, and the idea of rank and degree is not foreign to the concept of martyr, the concept of walī, or to the doctrine of Paradise in Shī'ī Islām. The exalted position of Husayn in the ta'ziyah does not necessarily mean that the function and importance of others are thereby threatened. A contemporary example is to be found in publications of the Imamia Mission of Lucknow. A particular imām may be singled out for consideration. The characterization might lead one to conclude that he has no equal, but other pamphlets make it clear that the imāms are understood to be remarkably alike.

CONCLUSION

If we should summarize what are regarded as the more important points which were made in this study, we would call attention to the following:

1) Considerable confusion on the subject of the ta'ziyah has resulted from an undefined use of the word. It is important to ascertain, if possible, the way in which a writer uses the word, ta'ziyah.

2) While the ta'ziyah is based upon an historical event, it does not appear to concern itself with a portrayal of the event as the historian would reconstruct it. It is rather what might be called a historical myth whereby an important religious message is proclaimed, and a cultic act is performed whereby the participating community offers condolence for Karbalā' and those involved in it. Participation in the act merits consideration on the part of God and the holy family.

3) The ta'ziyah is usually regarded as an early nineteenth century phenomenon. This conclusion seems to place too much emphasis upon Morier's report and neglects a thorough study of earlier reports by eye-witnesses of the ta'ziyah. This study suggests an earlier possible date on the evidence that Le Bruyn's description of Muharram festivities indicate the presence of activities which are on the verge of being a theatrical presentation.

Perhaps more important is the related suggestion that the ta'ziyah developed gradually out of Muharram festivities and that no outside influence is necessary to account for the new phenomenon.

4) As for connections between the ta'ziyah and the Adonis-Tammuz festival, the approach of this study places limitations on the right to draw conclusions here. But surely there are difficulties in the areas of both thought and function. The prominent presence of ideas from Shī'ī doctrine and Hadīth literature make it necessary for any theory on the origin of the ta'ziyah to consider connections between the ancient festival and indigenous developments in Islām.

5) The racial-political motivation sometimes ascribed to the ta'ziyah is difficult to find in the text of the ta'ziyah which was used in this study.

6) From the classification which was suggested in the introduction, we are inclined to favor the theme of soteriology. But this needs to be qualified and clarified. The important core of recognized Shī'ī doctrine and the insight which the concept of martyr in Hadīth literature offers, makes it possible to make statements about the ta'ziyah from the perspective of indigenous Islamic developments. The use of Christian parallels to explain the ta'ziyah does not seem to be helpful or fair to either religious tradition. The redemption motif must be understood

and explained within the context of the doctrines of the imāmate, martyrdom, and intercession. This means that Islamic categories of thought are most helpful in this respect. In the light of the presence of significant Shī'ī thought and ideas from Hadīth literature, if one seeks a more ancient origin for pivotal ideas in the ta'ziyah, we are inclined to favor further investigation of Wensinck's theory which he summarizes in these words:

> Reviewing the way that the chief ideas concerning the martyrs have taken, we find that the central dogma originates in primitive views concerning the fallen warriors; that it is the Maccabaean age which adapts this and cognate views to monotheism; that at the same time a Hellenistic current of thought is joined to it introducing the type of the ascetic philosopher and combining the two type under the common designation of μαρτυς ; that Christianity works out this twofold set of ideas and hands them down to Islam, in such a way that this religion in its turn uses them in full harmony with its own inner development. This latter phenomenon is, in reality, due to the fact that Christianity and Islam are cognate phenomena, in so far as both are exponents of Hellenistic monotheism. 66

7) There also appears to be some reason why the ta'ziyah should not be referred to as the Persian Passion play. The history of equating the ta'ziyah with Christian Passion plays is one reason. This is related to the tendency to explain the ta'ziyah in Christian terms. One might well question whether the ta'ziyah may properly be called a drama. There is no tension, no conflict, no suspense, and little development. Everything is known from the outset. Of course, some Christian Passion performances

are not without some of these characteristics. The word, passion, places an emphasis upon the experience of suffering. Surely this is present in the ta'ziyah. But we have noted that in a very real way, the dramatic presentation is a ta'ziyah--an expression of condolence itself. It is also meant to evoke identification and sympathy with the suffering at Karbalā'. Merit is gained for presenting, performing, and sympathetically witnessing a ta'ziyah. In the light of such considerations as these, it seems appropriate to prefer the term, ta'ziyah, as a more adequate term for this dramatic religious act.

8) The ta'ziyah may become a phenomenon of the past under political and even religious attempts to suppress it. Nevertheless, texts such as the one which was used in this study will remain important to an understanding of the religious convictions of the people of Persia in the nineteenth century. There is also evidence that an essential part of the message of the ta'ziyah is capable of surviving and appealing to the twentieth century. The best example of this that has come to the writer's attention is the material published by the Imamia Mission of Lucknow. The message carried by their publications has a significant correspondence with the message of the ta'ziyah. Salient points of emphasis are illustrated by the content of a poster published by the Mission.

Teachings of Karbala

1. BE SURE THAT THIS LIFE IS EPHEMERAL; WHILE THE LIFE TO COME IS ETERNAL.

2. LET THE AIM OF YOUR LIFE BE TO PROTECT THE SUBLIME HUMAN VALUES.

3. SUBORDINATE YOUR OWN INTERESTS TO THOSE OF OTHERS.

4. BE PREPARED FOR EVERY SACRIFICE FOR THE CAUSE OF TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

5. DO NOT POLLUTE YOURSELF BY SUPPORTING THE WRONG.

6. NEVER BE AWED BY THE MATERIAL FORCES OF THE WRONG.

7. PERSIST TO YOUR LAST IN MAKING EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT TO MAINTAIN PEACE AND TRANQUILITY.

8. CARRY ON YOUR CAMPAIGN OF REFORM SILENTLY UNTIL A CLASH WITH THE WRONG IS INEVITABLE.

9. CULTIVATE SO MUCH OF ENDURANCE THAT THE TYRANNY GETS TIRED IN ITS EFFORTS WHILE YOU STICK TO YOUR STAND LIKE THE IMMOVEABLE ROCK.

10. IT IS THE FAITH IN GOD THAT ALONE CAN ENCOURAGE A MAN FOR INCREDIBLE SACRIFICES IN THE CAUSE OF TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

11. BE SURE THAT THE ULTIMATE VICTORY IS FOR THOSE WHO ABIDE BY TRUTH.

12. ADVISE AND INSTRUCT ONE ANOTHER FOR PERSEVERENCE IN TRUTH AND FOR PATIENCE IN CALAMITIES.

13. WHEN A CLASH WITH DIABOLIC FORCES BECOMES INDISPENSIBLE YOU MUST PLAY THE PART OF A LEADEN BULWORK.

14. REMEMBER: "HONOURABLE DEATH IS BETTER THAN A DISGRACEFUL LIFE." 67

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Robert Ker Porter, Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia ... in 1817, 1818, 1819, 1820 (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1822), II, 622-623.

2. Najmeh Najafi with Helen Hinckley, Persia is My Heart (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), 66-67.

3. Supra, 1.

4. S. G. W. Benjamin, Persia and the Persians, (Boston: Ticknor and Co., 1887), 365-406. H. G. Dwight, Persian Miniatures (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1917), 121-150. "The Passion Play of Islam," The Muslim World, XXII (1932), 283-286. Henri Masse, Persian Beliefs and Customs, trans. Charles A. Messner (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1954), 108-128.

5. In chapter one more specific information will be given on how the West came to know about the ta'ziyah; here we are interested in summarizing the ways in which the West has understood the significance of the ta'ziyah.

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9. Jacob Landau, Studies in the Arab Theater and Cinema (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958),5.

10. Arnold, 264.

11. Supra, 1. She is simply referring to the duration of the observance, but under the influence of the use of Christian parallels to explain the meaning of the ta'ziyah, a reader might easily equate Muharram with Lent. For a similar example see The United States and Turkey and Iran (Cambridge: Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), by Lewis V. Thomas and Richard N. Frye, 204. "It is the equivalent of Christmas and Easter rolled into one."

12. Landau, 5.

13. "The Passion story cannot, of course, be considered apart from the preaching of the resurrection to which it is the prelude." Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), 188.

14. Comte De Gobineau, Les Religions et Les Philosophies Dans L'Asie Centrale (3rd ed.; Paris: Les Editions G. Crès et Cie., 1928), 314-387.

15. Ruben Levy, Persian Literature (London: Oxford University Press, reprint 1948), 100.

16. L. P. Elwell-Sutton, Modern Iran (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1941), 54. Also see Dwight, 123, 128-129; Vladimir Minorsky, "Iran: Opposition, Martyrdom, and Revolt," Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization, ed. Gustave E. Von Grunebaum (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 187.

17. Supra, 1.

18. Levy, 100.

19. "Ta'ziyah," Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, 591.

CHAPTER ONE

1. It becomes very important to attempt to understand how the word is used by a writer. An undefined use of the word is a contributing factor to the confusion about the meaning and significance of the ta'ziyah.

2. Hans Wehr, A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, ed. J. Milton Cowan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1961), 611-612.

3. Strothmann, "Ta'ziyah," Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, 590.

4. Muhammad b. 'Alī Ibn Bābawayhi al-Qummi, Risālatu'l -I'tiqādāt, trans. Asaf A. A. Fyzee (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), 103.

5. John Norman Hollister, The Shi'a of India (London: Luzac and Co., 1953), 77.

6. Majlisī, The Life and Religion of Muhammed, trans. of Hyat-ul-Kuloob by J. L. Merrick (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Co., 1850), 30, 47-48, 52, 64, 78, 98, 118, 130, 133, 146, 152-153, 155-156.

7. Ibn Bābawayhi, Risālatu'l-I'taqādāt, 103.

8. In the latter part of the century restrictions began to be placed upon the performance of the ta'ziyah.

9. Hollister, The Shi'a of India, 166. For illustrations see, The World's Great Religions (New York: Time Incorporated, 1957), 118-119.

10. Strothmann, "Ta'ziyah," Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, 590.

11. Hollister, The Shi'a of India, 173.

12. Ibn at-Tiq taqa, al Fakhri, trans. C. E. J. Whitting (London: Luzac and Co., 1947), 111.

13. Ameer Ali, The Moslem Festivities (Calcutta: Printed and Published for the author by Messrs. H. C. Gangooly and Co., 1892), 6.

14. A. A. A. Fyzee, "Shī'ī Legal Theories," Law in the Middle East, I, Origin and Development of Islamic Law, ed. Khadduri and Liebesny (Washington: The Middle East Institute, 1955), 113.

15. M. G. S. Hodgson, "How Did the Early Shī'a Become Sectarians?", Journal of the American Oriental Society, 75. (January-March, 1955), 1-13.

16. Ibid.; W. Montgomery Watt,"Shi'ism Under the Umayyads," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, (1960), 158-72.

17. Ameer Ali, A Short History of the Saracens (London: Macmillan and Co., 1951), 21.

18. J. Wellhausen, The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall, trans. Margaret Weir (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1927), 81-82.

19. Hollister, The Shia of India, 23, 31-32.

20. Ibrahim Hassan Hassan, "Aspects of Shi'ah History," The Muslim World, (1957), 271. R. A. Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 217.

21. L. V. Vaglieri, "'Alī b. Abī Tālib," Encyclopedia of Islam (new ed.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), I, 385.

22. Hodgson, "How Did the Early Shī'a Become Sectarians?", 3.

23. The survivors of Karbalā' settled in Madīnah. Zubayr capitalized on the story which they told. D. M. Donaldson, The Shi'ite Religion (London: Luzac and Co., 1933), 103.

24. Watt, "Shi'ism Under the Umayyads," 158.

25. Ibid., 162.

26. Carl Brockelmann, History of the Islamic Peoples, trans. Joel Carmichael and Moshe Perlmann (New York: Capricorn Books, 1960), 79.

27. Donaldson, The Shi'ite Religion, 101-102

28. Ibid., 102, 109.

29. Browne, The Literary History of Persia, I, 130.

30. E. Honigmann, "Mashhad Husain," Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, 359.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., 360-361.

34. Ameer Ali, The Moslem Festivities, 9. Hollister, The Shi'a of India, 164.

35. A. J. Wensinck, "'Ashūrā'," Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, 47-48.

36. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, IV, 31. Reuben Levy, A Baghdad Chronicle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), 159-160.

37. Levy, A Baghdad Chronicle, 168.

38. Benjamin, Persia and the Persians, 387, 405.

39. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, III, 180-181.

40. Ameer Ali, The Moslem Festivities, 8.

41. James Fraser, History of Nadir Shah (2d ed.; London: Printed for A. Millar, 1742), 198-99. Hollister, The Shi'a of India, 76.

42. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, IV, 172-173.

43. Ibid., 172-177.

44. Ibid., 177-181.

45. Ibid., 181-182.

46. "Various prayers which are to be recited at worship must be learned by every pupil; and those boys who can melodiously recite the Persian or Arabic verses which describe the battle of the Martyrs are supposed to have attained a great deal in religious education, for from these Roza Khani, as those pious recitations are called, both the Mullah and the parents of the boy derive much merit in the eyes of their kinsmen, whilst the reciter himself may be marked out for an important clerical career. He takes as much pride in it as a choir boy singing in an English church." Sirdar Ikbal Ali Shah, Eastward to Persia (Fleet St.: Wright and Brown, (n.d.)), 92.

47. Adam Olearius, The Voyages and Travells of the Ambassadors ... , trans. John Davies (2d ed.; London: Printed for John Starkey and Thomas Basset, 1669), 174-176.

48. One of the best from the late 19th century is Benjamin, Persia and the Persians, 365-406.

49. Travels into Muscovy, Persia, and Part of the East Indies, trans. from the original French (2 vols; London: Printed for A. Bettesworth and C. Hitch, S. Birt, C. Davis, J. Clarke, S. Harding D. Browne, A. Millar, J. Shuckburgh, and T. Osborne, 1737), I, 215-218.

50. James Morier, A Journey Through Persia (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1812), 194-197.

51. Strothmann, "Ta'ziyah," Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, 591. G. E. von Grunebaum, Muhammadan Festivals (New York: Henry Schuman, 1951), 89. Also see, Constance E. Padwick, Henry Martyn Confessor of the Faith (London: Student Christian Movement, 1923), 273.

52. James Morier, A Second Journey Through Persia ... 1810-1816 (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1818), 175-184.

53. Strothmann, "Ta'ziyah," Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, 591. Levy, Persian Literature, 100.

54. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, IV, 28-29. Strothmann, "Ta'ziyah," Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, 591. The report of J. B. Tavernier is also mentioned.

55. "... he [Ivanow] is playing particularly free, as that the Persian Ḥusayn-plays were 'obviously' derived from Medieval Catholic Europe." Marshall G. S. Hodgson, The Order of the Assassins ('s Gravenhage: Mouton and Co., 1955), 32. Two Persian friends suggested to Browne the possibility of European influence. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, IV, 29.

56. See the preface to the work cited in note 14 of the Introduction.

57. Arnold, Essays in Criticism, 225.

58. Stanley Lane-Poole, Studies in a Mosque (London: W. H. Allen and Co., 1883), 228-229.

59. The series was first published in 1865. When "A Persian Passion Play" was added is not indicated in the edition used here.

60. R. Dozy, Essai sur l'Histoire de l'Islamisme, Traduit du Hollandais par Victor Chauvin (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1879).

61. A. Chodzko, Théatre Persan (Paris: Libraire De La Societe Asiatique De Paris, 1878).

62. Lewis Pelly, The Miracle Play of Hasan and Husain, revised with explanatory notes by Arthur N. Wollaston (2 vols.; London: W. H. Allen and Co., 1879).

63. Wilhelm Litten, Das Drama in Persien, mit einem Geleitwort von Friedrich Rosen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1929).

64. Landau, Studies in the Arab Theater and Cinema, 8.

65. Benjamin, Persia and the Persians, 380.

66. Ameer Ali, The Moslem Festivities, 12.

67. Thomas and Frye, The United States and Turkey and Iran, 204.

68. Ibid., Great Britain, Naval Intelligence Division, Persia, B.R. 525 (Restricted) Geographical Handbook Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Sept., 1945), 329.

69. Lane-Poole, Studies in a Mosque, 229.

70. Ibid., 230.

71. Later scenes mention the names of some martyrs whose martyrdom has not been presented in any of the scenes in the Pelly collection. It appears that some of the scenes of martyrdom were eliminated, reducing the number of scenes to 37.

72. See note 62.

CHAPTER TWO

1. The titles of the scenes are given as they are found in the Table of Contents in the Pelly collection.

2. Sūrah 12.

3. Honigmann, "Mashhad Husain," Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, 360.

4. The first scene from Vol. II.

5. Reference to the Pelly collection will be given in the body of the text of this paper. The exclusive rights of Husayn are negated in the text as a whole. This is typical of the extreme statement which is occasionally made in this version.

6. Sūrah 33: 44-45.

7. An important concept in Ibn Bābawayhi, Risālatu'l - I'tiqādāt, 53-60.

8. References to her illustrious sons and a daughter.

9. Cf. A. J. Wensinck, "'Izrā'īl," Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, 190.

10. Ibn Bābawayhi, Risālatu'l-I'tiqādāt, 34-35.

11. Hollister, The Shi'a of India, 173.

12. "The narrative is frequently interwoven with occasionally irrelevant episodes, such as scenes based on the Old and the New Testament or on Oriental folk-lore, meant to relieve the tension caused by the main performance." Landau, Studies in the Arab Theater and Cinema, 6.

CHAPTER THREE

1. Supra, 1.

2. "Der Ursprung der Ceremonien des Hosein-Festes," Zeitschrift für Assyriologie, IX (1894). See Von Grunebaum, Muhammadan Festivals, Note 4, 101; and Strothmann, "Ta'ziyah," Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, 591.

3. Von Grunebaum, Muhammadan Festivals, 88-89.

4. Ibid., 88.

5. Strothmann, "Ta'ziyah," Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, 591.

6. Mircea Eliade, Cosmos and History (New York: Harper and Brothers, Torchbook Series, 1959). 100-101.

7. Ibid., 101.

8. Charles Virolleaud, Le Théatre Persan (Paris: Librairie D'Amerique et D'Orient, 1950), 128-136.

9. Strothmann, "Ta'ziyah," Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, 591.

10. Pelly, I 200, 231, 245, 272, 298.

11. Pelly, I 208-209, II 203, 228, 233, 271.

12. This is a variation on the classification in Browne, A Literary History of Persia, IV, 400-401. There the second is for Jews and the third is for Christians.

13. Pelly, I 249, 260, II 16, 211.

14. Three creeds were consulted here. 1) Muḥammad b. 'Alī Ibn Bābawayhi al-Qummī, Risālatu'l-I'tiqādāt, trans. A.A.A. Fyzee (London: Oxford University Press, 1942). This creed is one of the earliest creeds of the Twelver Shī'ah. Ibn Bābawayhi is the author of one of the celebrated "Four Books" of the Shi'ah. He died in 381/991. 2) Hasan b. Yūsuf b. 'Alī Ibnu'l-Mutahhar al-Hillī, Al-Bābu' L-Hādī 'Ashar, with commentary by Miqdād-i-Fādil al-Hillī, trans. W. M. Miller (London:

Published by The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland--Sold by Luzac and Co. Ltd., 1958 (reprint). This creed comes from the eighth century and has become a popular, recognized classic. 3) 'Alī Asghar b. 'Alī Akbar, 'Aqā'idu'sh-Shī'ah, summarized by Browne, A Literary History of Persia, IV, 381-402. This creed dates from around the time that the Pelly edition was being gathered--the middle of the 19th century.

15. Ibn Bābawayhi, 94.

16. Supra, 65, 66, 67.

17. Ibn Bābawayhi, 95.

18. Ibid., 48.

19. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, IV, 390. Care has been exercised in the use of traditions on this point.

20. Ibn Bābawayhi, 86, 97, 100.

21. Ibid., 89-92.

22. Supra, 85-86.

23. Ibn Bābawayhi, 32. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, IV, 386-387.

24. Al-Hillī, 87-88. Also Ibn Bābawayhi, 54, 68.

25. Ibn Bābawayhi, 105-110. Cf. Pelly II 45.

26. Ibid., 103.

27. Ibid., 109-110. Those against the imāms are evil and their destiny is certain.

28. Ibn Bābawayhi, 54-55.

29. Al-Hillī, 73-74.

30. W. Björkman, "Shahīd," Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, 515.

31. Sūrah 4: bet. 160-165.

32. Sūrah 2: bet..135-140.

33. Sūrah 9:20

34. Sūrah 61:10-11

35. Björkman, "Shahīd," Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, 515.

36. I am indebted to two sources in particular: A. J. Wensinck, "The Oriental Doctrine of the Martyrs," Mededeeling Der Koninklijke Akademie Van Wetenschappen, Afdeeling Letterkunde, Deel 53, Serie A (Amsterdam: Vitgave Der Koninklijke Akademie Van Wetenschappen, 1922). 147-174. Björkman, "Shahīd," Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, 515-517.

37. Björkman, "Shahīd," Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, 515.

38. Pelly, I 132, 147, 152.

39. Wensinck, "The Oriental Doctrine ... , " 150.

40. Björkman, "Shahīd," Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, 516.

41. Ibid.

42. Wensinck, "The Oriental Doctrine ... , " 171.

43. Björkman, "Shahīd," Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, 515.

44. Wensinck, "The Oriental Doctrine ... , " 148.

45. Ibn Bābawayhi, 78-79.

46. Wensinck, "The Oriental Doctrine ... , " 150.

47. Ibid., 152.

48. Ibid.

49. Supra, 19.

50. Björkman, "Shahīd," Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, 516.

51. Wensinck, "The Oriental Doctrine ... , " 152.

52. Ibid., 152-153.

53. Ibid., 153.

54. Ibid., 162.

55. A. J. Wensinck, "Shafā'a," Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, 511.

56. Ibid.

57. A. J. Wensinck, The Muslim Creed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 182.

58. Ibid., 180-183.

59. Björkman, "Shahīd," Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, 516.

60. Wensinck, "The Oriental Doctrine ... , " 153.

61. B. Carra de Vaux, "Wali," Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, 629.

62. Supra, 25.

63. W. M. Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology (Edinburgh: University Press, 1962), 21.

64. Supra, 21.

65. Al-Hillī, 52.

66. Wensinck, "The Oriental Doctrine ... , " 173-174.

67. Imamia Mission, Lucknow, India. The spelling of the source has been preserved.

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